

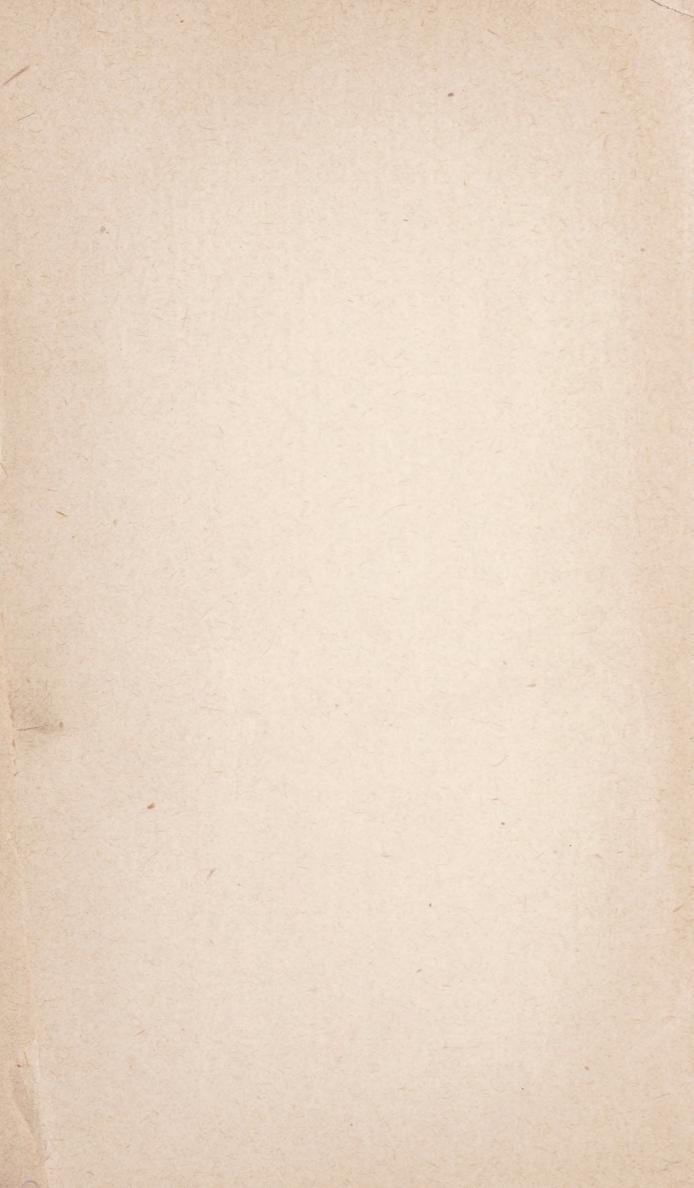
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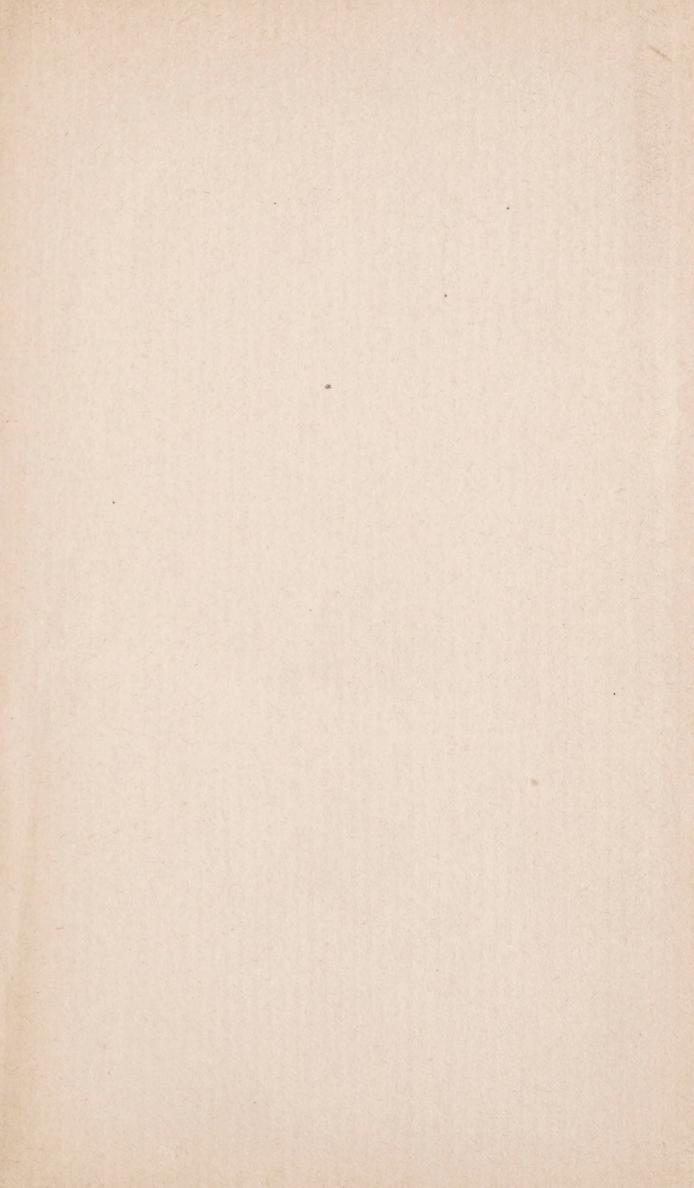
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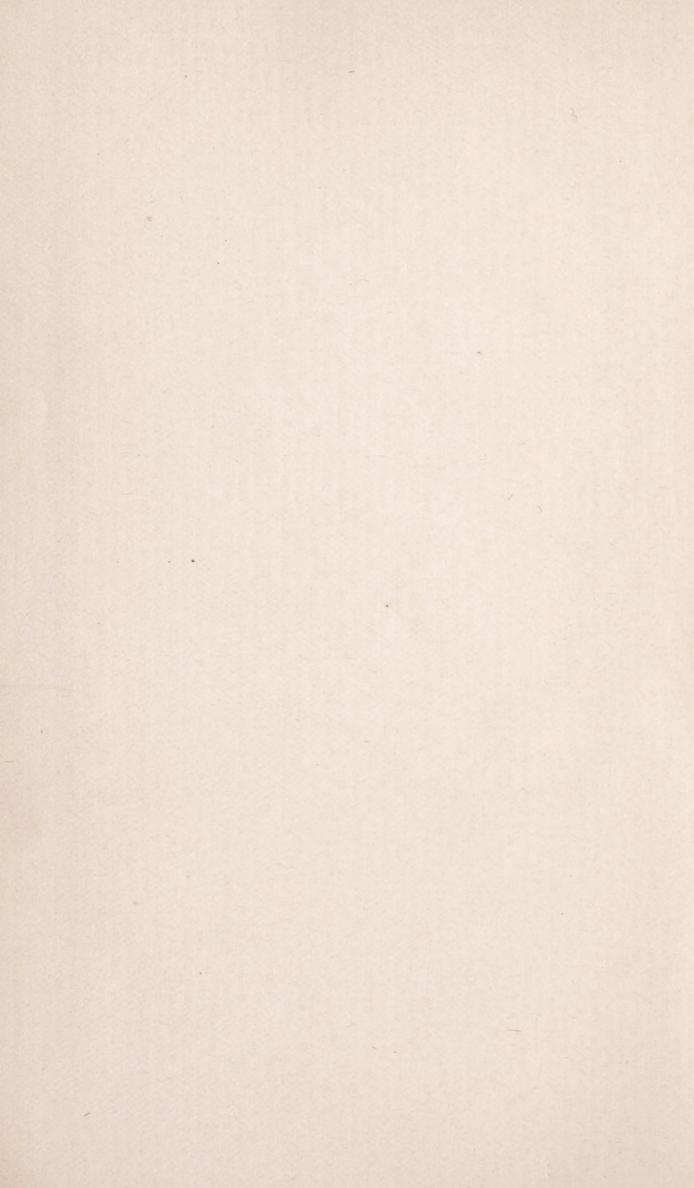
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UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.













"MISS BELINDA, WHERE DID YOU GET HIM?"

MISS BELINDA'S FRIENDS.

BY

MARY DWINELL CHELLIS,

AUTHOR OF "THE BREWERY AT TAYLORVILLE"; "THE BREWER'S FORTUNE";

"ALL FOR MONEY"; "TEN CENTS"; "WEALTH AND WINE"; "OUR
HOMES"; "THE TEMPERANCE DOCTOR"; "AUNT DINAH'S

PLEDGE"; "AT LION'S MOUTH"; "OUT OF THE FIRE";

"FROM FATHER TO SON"; "BREAD AND BEER";

"FIFE AND DRUM"; "DRINKING JACK"; "THE

OLD TAVERN"; "A JOLLY TIME";

"PROFIT AND LOSS"; ETC.



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MISS BELINDA'S FRIENDS.

CHAPTER I.

POOR FRITTER.

"There is poor Fritter coming up the garden-walk, handkerchief in hand, and eyes red with weeping," exclaimed Elva Harris, a merry girl of seventeen. "Probably, as grandmother would say, her 'dear Johnny has broke loose again,' and she has come to you to lure him back to home and duty. I should think you would be quite worn out with that woman."

"But you see I am not," was replied pleasantly. "I wonder she is not worn out with all the trouble she has had. Such a hard, disappointed life must be terrible."

"Do you really believe, sister mine, that she ever had any bright anticipations? Do you suppose she ever dreamed of happiness with the late, lamented Fritter?" "Of course she did; she had her dreams, the same as other girls. You know grandmother says she was very pretty, and so delighted at the thought of having a home of her own, that she would not believe anything against John Fritter, although other people knew he was too fond of beer and tobacco. I pity the poor woman, and so do you, Elva. You would help her as willingly as I do if she appealed to you."

"I am not sure of that, Sabra. You know I am living for pleasure, while you are living for duty, and there is all the difference in the world between the two. I am glad I chose pleasure as my watchword."

"I am glad I chose duty as mine," said the elder sister, glancing at an elegantly embroidered motto, in which the single word, "Duty," was so hidden by its surroundings of lilies and roses as not to be readily seen.

"Then we are both satisfied with our choice, but it is too bad you should be interrupted, when I know you had promised

yourself two hours for study this morning."

"I may have part of that time even now."

"Not if poor Fritter once begins to pour her troubles into your sympathetic ear. Buy her off, and I will pay half the bill. I need your assistance, and you know charity begins at home."

Sabra Harris smiled upon her sister, and laying aside her books, went to meet the poor woman, who never doubted her kindness or ability, and who greeted her by exclaiming:

"My heart is nearly broken, and I had nowhere else to go. My Johnny is in Reegan's saloon, cursing and drinking, and he wouldn't come away for my calling him. I didn't want to trouble you, but I can't let him stay there, when I know he would come for your asking. He will never refuse you."

"I will go with you," said Sabra Harris quietly. "But first come into the kitchen and have a cup of coffee with lunch."

"Thank you, but I couldn't eat; not if I was starving. My Johnny may do something dreadful before we get there. O Miss Harris, you don't know a mother's heart."

"Where is Teddy?"

"At school. He is the bravest boy. He wouldn't taste the liquor, if he was killed for it. I wish Johnny was like him."

"Wait a moment and I will be ready. Have you coffee at home?"

"Not a kernel. I couldn't get money to buy it, besides bread for us three; and the rent coming due. What will become of us, if Johnny goes on drinking!"

Sabra Harris neither hesitated nor delayed, but prepared herself for the proposed walk.

"Where are you going?" asked her sister.

"Going to find John Fritter. His mother says he is in Reegan's saloon."

"And are you going into that horrid place?"

- "If it seems necessary."
- "Do you think it your duty to do that?"
- "Yes, if there is no other way to accomplish my purpose."

"If father and mother were here, I don't believe they would approve of it."

"I think they would. They would wish me to act according to my convictions of duty."

Sabra Harris would gladly have excused herself from the task before her, but there seemed no alternative. Having begun a good work, she was not one to leave it unfinished because of difficulties. So she walked on with Mrs. Fritter, until they reached a part of the town where idlers congregated and saloons found ready customers.

Reegan's was the most uninviting place of all. The windows were closed and curtained, as if to screen its inmates from observation; yet the door stood slightly ajar, so that sounds from within could be distinctly heard in the street.

"That is John," cried the mother, as a terrible oath was uttered, followed by the refrain of a low drinking song.

She would have pushed her way in, had not her companion detained her, while ringing the bell, to which Mrs. Reegan responded from her rooms over the saloon, bidding Miss Harris a cordial welcome.

"Can I see your husband?" asked the young lady, after an exchange of greetings.

"I don't know, 'though I'm sure he'd be glad to please you," was the hesitating reply. "Janie is always talking of her Sunday teacher, and he is sure to think as she does. Come up the stairs, and I'll do my best to bring him to you. If Janie was here, he would come for her call. I'll send little Pat. He wouldn't heed me."

No more did he heed little Pat, who came crying back, reporting that his father had threatened him with a whipping, and declaring that he wouldn't go again for anything.

"I am sorry," said Mrs. Reegan, evi-

dently mortified at the result of her effort. "Can I tell my husband when he comes up to dinner?"

"It will be too late then. I will go into the saloon myself."

"O Miss, don't go there," exclaimed the saloon-keeper's wife. "You don't know what it's like in there. There's a deal of news stirring this morning, and there's a free lunch, or something, to run against the saloon opposite. Oh! I'd be the happiest woman in all the wide world if every drop of beer and whiskey was poured into the big sea and never another drop made. Janie hates it. She learned that of you, Miss, and I wish she was here. She'd bring her father to you. Don't go there, Miss Harris; it is getting worse every minute."

"But I must go. Mrs. Fritter's son is there, and I have promised to call him out."

"If you are going, call them all out, Miss, and never let them go in again. I'd rather wash seven days in a week and live

on a crust, than have my children brought up within sound of such a dreadful place."

"Then why do you let your husband keep such a place?" asked Mrs. Fritter.

"Let him!" repeated Mrs. Reegan.
"Have you lived so long in the world and not learned that a poor woman's words don't count against liquor? There's them who might talk and act, too, but they are too bound up in their own ease and pleasure. If I was rich and had grand learning, I'd fight the liquor with all my might. It's that I want Janie to do. The likes of Miss Harris are the ones to be heard."

"I will be heard," responded Sabra Harris, and without stopping to count again the obstacles in her way, she went down the stairs and into the saloon, where, addressing the proprietor, she said:

"I am looking for some one I was told I should find here."

In his surprise at sight of the speaker and the sound of her voice, he let fall a glass from his hand, while the attention of every one in the room was fixed upon her. "Who is it?" asked Mr. Reegan, hesitatingly.

"John Fritter," replied Miss Harris. "I am going to his mother's, and I wish him

to accompany me."

"I am sorry, Miss Harris, but he is in no fit condition to be company for any lady, let alone yourself, the finest lady of all."

"But, Mr. Reegan, I shall be very much obliged to you if you will send——" Here, seeing the person of whom she had come in search, she called to him:

"Come, John, some one is waiting for you."

"It is the old woman. She has been after him once this morning," remarked a middle-aged man, so much intoxicated that he ventured upon a coarse joke, which, however, had no sooner passed his lips than Reegan sprang toward him and would have felled him to the floor had not others interfered.

"Miss Harris, I will have John Fritter outside the door in two minutes," said a young man who had drank less than his

companions. "I beg of you not to stay here longer. It is no fit place for you."

"Is it a fit place for you?" she asked, looking steadily into his flushed face.

"It was not fit for me a month ago, but I am different now," he answered. "Don't stop. I will have John Fritter at the door as soon as possible."

She waited to hear no more. Outside she found Mrs. Fritter, and presently John appeared, although unable to walk or stand without assistance. The young man who had taken him thus far offered to accompany him home, which offer was gladly accepted; Sabra Harris and Mrs. Fritter leading the way until they reached a dilapidated house beyond the limits of the village. Here they were met by a pale-faced woman, leaning upon a crutch, who said:

"You never did a better morning's work, Miss Harris, than you have done in bringing this boy home. We are strangers, but we are travelling the same road; and, if I am not mistaken, we are looking forward to the same rest at the end. You are Dr. Harris' daughter?"

"Yes, ma'am; and you?"

"I am Belinda Mann. Your father will remember the Manns in his native town. But I won't keep you talking, when your work is only half done. Mrs. Fritter, I have made a fire in your kitchen; I thought you might need it."

"Can I be of further service?" asked the young man, who still gave a supporting arm to John Fritter.

"You can be of service to me if you will come in," answered Sabra Harris, who wished to know more of him, hoping that she might induce him to remain away from the saloon.

He would have much preferred to hurry from her sight, yet he could not refuse the invitation so kindly given.

"I wish I had some coffee, but I have only tea," said Miss Mann, coming into Mrs. Fritter's kitchen. "There is nothing better than strong coffee for killing the effects of liquor."

Another had thought of this, and it was not long before two steaming cups of coffee were presented to John Fritter and his companion. These being quickly drank, more were brought, which so cleared the poor boy's brain that he realized his shameful condition.

"O Johnny, how could you do it, after you promised so sure and strong," cried his mother, seizing his hands and holding them fast in her own. "Did you spend the money I gave you to buy flour, and not another cent in the house? If you did, we shall starve."

"I can earn some more," he said in a faltering voice.

"Then it is gone. O Johnny, how could you do it, and Teddy to come home with nothing to eat."

"I am sorry, mother. Forgive me this once more, and I promise never to taste of liquor again."

"There is some excuse for him," now said John's companion. "Reegan offered

a free lunch, and work is so dull, it was a temptation to some of us poor fellows."

"I am afraid it was a dear lunch to some of you," responded Sabra Harris. "Such drink as Reegan sells costs more than good wholesome food; and if the lunch was advertised as free, no one doubts that he expected to be well paid for it. He did not intend it as either a charity or a kindness."

"No, ma'am; he is working for himself, whatever he does. I am sure of that; but when a fellow is desperate, he is sure to do the most foolish things."

"Why need any one be desperate when the sun shines upon him, and God's love is over him? There is never a cloud so dark but has a silver lining."

"There is the cloud of sin, Miss Har-ris."

"The blood of Christ cleanseth from all sin. You must have heard that."

"Yes, ma'am; more times than I can count. My father and mother were Christians, and I was never so bad as I am

now, before I came to this town. There is no excuse for me, either, 'though I have had hard luck. I expected to find work, so I could provide for my little sisters, but I can't do it. They have enough to eat, where they are, but they might be hungry with me. I don't know why I have told you so much about myself," added the speaker. "I am afraid I have troubled you, but I didn't want you to think worse of me than I deserve."

"Will you tell me your name?" asked Sabra Harris, more and more interested in the stranger.

"My name is Henry Barlow," he answered.

"And you have sisters?"

"I have two sisters; little girls, who have no home except as they earn it."

"And you were looking for work?"

"Yes, ma'am."

"I think I can help you to find work, if you are willing to do whatever offers, and will keep away from liquor-saloons. You must love your sisters better than

you love the drink you know will ruin you."

"I do love them, Miss Harris, and I promised my mother, when she was dying, that I would take care of them. They love me too. It almost broke their hearts to be separated from me."

For a moment after saying this, Henry Barlow was silent; his thoughts going back to the old home, where he had lived with father, mother, and sisters. Then springing to his feet, he exclaimed:

"The spell is broken. I am free again. I will do with my might what my hands find to do, and I will never taste of liquor again."

CHAPTER II.

TEDDY.

"How is poor Fritter and poor Fritter's Johnny?" asked Elva Harris, as her sister came into the dining-room with flushed face and weary step.

"I left them better and happier than I

found them," was replied.

"So much better, that you feel paid for the effort and self-denial it cost you? I know it was a self-denial for you to give up your books and go in search of Johnny dear."

"I feel amply repaid for all I have done. I hope I have saved Johnny, and I believe I have saved another, you would think better worth saving."

"Did you go into Reegan's saloon?"

"I did."

"O Sabra, how could you! It must be

a dreadful place. Susan West will be more astonished at you than she ever was before."

"It will be well if Susan West never needs go to a drinking-saloon for her brother. I went because I could do my duty in no other way. You know I believe we can accomplish almost anything we really desire; but we can not choose the way in which to accomplish it. I found a young man in the saloon ready to help me, and now I intend to help him."

"It is not possible that you enjoyed your morning's work."

"I am sure I did; or, rather, I did not take the question of enjoyment into consideration. I only went straight forward with what I had to do."

"I tried to go straight forward with what I had to do, but the fates were against me. It seemed to me I was never so stupid before. It must have been for want of your inspiring presence. Lucinda, too, missed you. She wished to consult you about the dinner. She thinks you know almost as

much as mother, who is to her the very perfection of womanhood. It is wonderful how she has improved since father took her out of that wretched family. She does credit to her training."

"Most people can be won by kindness; and to her, poor child, kindness had the added charm of novelty."

Just then the door opened and a young girl came in, whose plain face lighted up at sight of Sabra Harris, with something so akin to beauty as to seem almost transfigured. Soon after she brought in dinner and the sisters were left to themselves.

The afternoon was spent quietly in reading and sewing, while watching for the return of their parents from a visit to distant friends.

"We have been in search of pleasure; now we have come back to duty," said Dr. Harris, after having made a careful inspection, to assure himself that nothing had suffered during his absence.

As it proved, there was an immediate call for his services, so that conversation

was postponed until morning, when Sabra asked him if he had ever known a woman by the name of Belinda Mann.

- "I knew a girl by that name," he replied. "A brave girl she was, too; fighting her own way in the world, and doing her best to keep a standing place for a drunken father, a discouraged mother, and a shiftless, reckless brother, considerably older than she was. I have not heard her name for more than twenty years, but I can remember just how she looked as she came hurrying into school, always a little late, yet sure to have her lessons learned in season. Her father moved out of town before I went away to school, and I have hardly thought of her in all these years."
 - "I saw her yesterday," said Sabra.
- "Saw her!" repeated the doctor.
 "Where?"
- "She lives in the house with Mrs. Fritter. She moved there last week, so she could more conveniently get work at sewing straw and knitting mittens. She told me she was alone in the world, dependent upon her

own hands for support. She said she couldn't count much on her feet since she injured her hip, although she is able to move about with the aid of a crutch."

"Strange you should have seen her. She must have changed a great deal, but I should be glad to renew my acquaintance with her. She came to school, one winter, wearing such a thin, faded calico dress, that we boys contributed enough to pay for something warm and comfortable for her, but she was none the warmer for it. She gave the merino to her mother and kept on wearing the same old dress. It was like her, too, to consider her mother before herself; but her way did not suit us boys, who thought Belinda the only member of the family worthy of any consideration."

"I fancy she is as brave and unselfish as ever. I left Mrs. Fritter in her care, and she promised to look well after John."

"She will do it. You may trust her for that; and if Mrs. Fritter and John are not past hope she will inspire them with something like energy. We must do what we can for her too. She has earned the right to a comfortable living. I hope she will not feel it her duty to adopt the poor Fritters."

"I hope not, although she might do worse than to adopt Teddy. He is going forward as fast as his bare feet will carry him."

"That is true, Sabra. He is a constant wonder to me. Every hair on his bushy head bristles with life, and I never see him without feeling that every step he takes has some definite purpose. When he is older, I think the family fortunes will begin to improve."

"If not, Sabra will exhaust herself," said Elva. "And really, father, do you think John Fritter is of sufficient consequence for her to go to Reegan's saloon after him?"

"Reegan's saloon is a wicked place, but John Fritter's soul is worth as much as yours or mine; and if the saloon was the only place where he could be reached, there was the place to go for him. Sabra had no choice in the matter. I can trust her common sense to decide all questions of propriety."

"Thank you, father," said the daughter, smiling brightly. "I wish never to go there again, but I am sure Mr. Reegan would not allow me to be insulted on his premises. Janie is the very apple of his eye, and, as her Sunday-school teacher, he would consider me entitled to respect. I hope my visit to his saloon may benefit others besides John Fritter."

"I hope so, Sabra. I bid you God-speed in your work, and you can count on my assistance whenever it is needed."

Sabra Harris was admired by all who knew her. Her superior mental endowments, fine scholarship, and winning manners, had made her a universal favorite in school; while her ready sympathy and generous helpfulness endeared her to many who could better appreciate the loving heart. People were accustomed to her quiet independence, but they were surprised to know that she had really stood within the door of a liquor-saloon.

Mr. Reegan insisted upon his right to sell what he pleased, refusing to listen to his wife's entreaties to shut up "the vile hole," and even turning a deaf ear to Janie's remonstrances; yet, as he afterward said, the minute Miss Harris stepped over the threshold of his door, he felt that he was engaged in the meanest business a man could have. Janie was distressed that her teacher, whom she regarded with such reverent affection, should have seen her father amid such surroundings.

"You don't know what a commotion you have raised," said Elva, teasingly, to her sister.

"If I have raised a commotion which will advance the cause of temperance ever so little, I shall be thankful," answered Sabra.

"The cause of temperance must lay very near your heart. Ever since your last winter's visit, you have seemed to think the drinking of even a glass of wine a deadly sin."

"It often leads to a deadly sin. I never

thought how often until last winter when I was induced to study up the subject. After doing that, I could not avoid feeling that I had some responsibility in the matter."

"But seriously, Sabra, it is all so tiresome to a poor mortal like me, who is trying to look only on the pleasant side of things. You are fast becoming an enthusiast if not a fanatic."

"Remember my church vows, Elva. They bind me to live for the glory of God and the salvation of the world. I know you believe in consistency, and I am only trying to live, as far as I can, in accordance with my profession. Do my best, I shall come far short of my duty."

"You always silence me, good, wise sister that you are. I have no more to say, only I do hope your efforts will be appreciated."

"I hope so, too, but if they are not, I must go on all the same. I believe Teddy Fritter appreciates all that is done for him, whatever his brother may do. The very sight of him gives me renewed courage."

Teddy well deserved this commendation. He was always on the alert for opportunities to help himself and others, each new emergency seeming to awaken a new sense of responsibility. Of this fresh proof was given when, early the third morning after his brother's disgraceful fall, he came to ask Miss Harris if she knew of anybody who would "hire him for a job."

"I can do lots of work, if I am such a little fellow," he said confidently. "The largest men ain't always the smartest. Teacher told us so yesterday, and you see I have got to do something to take care of mother."

"But where is John?" asked his friend.

"He worked yesterday, and he is going to work to-day, though mother is scared half to death to have him out of her sight. She knows I won't touch a drop of liquor any more than I'd steal, so she ain't scared about me. I didn't have any supper, because there wasn't anything but some bread, and I left that for mother and John. Miss Belinda got breakfast for them and

offered me some, but I am going to earn mine before I eat it."

"And you have had nothing to eat since yesterday noon?"

"Only some berries and a piece of gingerbread the baker gave me for doing an errand. I ought to carried it home, but it looked so good it was all gone before I thought."

"You must be hungry, Teddy."

"Not much, but I think I will be by the time I've earned a breakfast."

"What if you don't get a chance to earn it?"

"Then I'll have to go without, because you see yesterday I just made up my mind I wouldn't cost anybody else anything. I'm going to run myself and pay my own bills, and do just as much more as I can. Now I'm out looking for a job, and I came here first, because I knew you was so good you wouldn't be out of patience and send me off in a hurry without giving me a chance to tell what I wanted."

"I am glad you came to me first, Teddy.

There is plenty of work to be done in our garden. I heard father say yesterday that the weeds were overtopping some of the vegetables."

"Might I pull them, Miss Harris? I won't leave a single root and I'll work real cheap. If I'm told which are the things to pull and which the ones to leave, I won't make any mistake about it."

"I will engage you to do the weeding, but you ought to have some breakfast before you go to work."

"Won't I earn it if I work a whole hour real fast?" asked the boy a little anxiously.

"Certainly you will."

"Then please show me, so I can begin right off."

"I will," answered Sabra Harris, adding quickly, however, as the doctor drove up: "There comes father. I will tell him about it," and in a few words he was made to comprehend the situation.

Teddy received a cordial greeting from Dr. Harris, with the offer of breakfast be-

fore doing a stroke of work; declining which, he was shown to the garden.

"I can do it," he said, sturdily, when he understood what was required of him. "I can't do it all to-day, but I can keep at it all my spare time till there isn't a weed left. Dr. Harris, how much do you think it will be worth to do it all up in first-rate shape?"

"I don't know exactly. How much would you be willing to do it for?"

"Would you be willing to give me a dollar in ten-cent pieces, and give me one ten-cent piece every night, so I could have something to live on the next day?" asked Teddy, looking up to the doctor somewhat doubtfully.

"Yes, I am willing to pay that, and give you your breakfasts and suppers besides," was replied with a smile.

"And wouldn't you think it too much, as though it was part charity? because, you know, doctor, I ain't going on charity."

"I know, Teddy, but it will be worth all that to me, to have my garden well weeded."

"Then, sir, it is a bargain, and I will have it done as soon as I can."

"Take your own time for it. You needn't hurry, although the sooner the weeds are out of the way, the better it will be for my vegetables."

"Yes, sir"; and without further comment, Teddy began his task.

For an hour he worked steadily, when Lucinda called him to breakfast.

"Is it time?" he asked, and being assured of this, he made no delay in responding to the call.

Thoroughly washed, and his hair well brushed, he was by no means an unattractive-looking boy, while the smile which overspread his face at sight of the food prepared for him was "worth going far to see."

He was so happy, and his work so satisfactory, that on the second day Mrs. Harris proposed that he be taken into the family as "chore-boy"; to be fed, clothed, and educated.

"O thank you, ma'am; I can't tell you

how glad I'd be to have such a home," said Teddy, when the proposal was made to him. "But there's mother and John. They'd get discouraged, and maybe give up, if I wasn't there nights. Miss Belinda says folks are made up different, and the Lord meant the strong should help the weak. I am so small, perhaps you wouldn't think of calling me strong, but I'm strong in here"; and the boy pressed his hand to his side, where he could feel the beatings of a heart as true and brave as Miss Belinda's own.

CHAPTER III.

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MISS BELINDA.

To many the room would have seemed poor and plain, but to Miss Belinda and Miss Belinda's cat it was pleasant and even luxurious.

In each of the two front windows was a thrifty geranium in full bloom, while outside, vines had been planted; the shade of which was enjoyed by anticipation. By one of these windows was a well-cushioned rocking-chair, with its attendant table, work-basket, and bundles of braid, waiting for the willing fingers, worn hard and thin by constant toil.

This for Miss Belinda, while in one corner of the room was a patchwork-covered hassock for the cat which had been her companion for years. She called him Martin Luther; and if he was not a reformer,

he had surely been a great comforter to his otherwise lonely mistress.

"Miss Belinda, where did you get him?" asked Teddy Fritter, as he petted the docile animal.

"I bought him in a liquor-shop," she replied. "A man sold him for a glass of liquor, and I paid ten cents for him. There was going to be a turkey shoot, and the man who bought him was going to put up Martin to be shot at just for fun."

"Why didn't the man who owned him give money for his liquor instead of giving a cat?"

"Because he was so poor he hadn't any money. He didn't own even a cat. Martin belonged to his little girl, and she felt dreadfully when her father carried him off. But when she found I had him, she was glad, and used to come to see him almost every day."

"Where is the little girl now?"

"In Heaven. She was sick and died; but she wasn't afraid to die, because she knew the Saviour had a home ready for her; and she was so happy, thinking of a home where she could stay, and not have to move every little while."

"I don't wonder she was, Miss Belinda. Things always get stove up, moving, and something always gets lost; 'though when we came here, I looked after things myself, and mother said it was the best moving she ever had. I hope we can stay here right along now. If we could only hire all the rooms, so there couldn't anybody else come in, I should feel better, because you never know who may come. Perhaps, though, it will be somebody we shall all like. We wondered about you, and now we like you almost as well as we do ourselves. But, Miss Belinda, how came you to go into a place where they sold liquor?"

"I went after a boy who was in there."

"And did you get him?"

"Yes, I did, and he didn't go there again, either. I saved a boy and a cat."

"I guess they were both worth saving. It was real grand in Miss Sabra to go for John, and it was just as grand in you to go for the boy you wanted. I am going to hold on to John, but I tell you, Miss Belinda, I am tip-top glad that I ain't like him, so I need somebody else to hang on to me. It seems as though anybody as big as he is oughtn't to depend on a little fellow like me."

"It does seem so, Teddy, but you remember I told you we are all dependent."

"Yes, ma'am. I suppose I knew it before, but since you told me I feel it different. I pray to God every night and morning, and He helps me all day long. I know He does. If John would pray he wouldn't be so slimsey. But there's mother calling, and there's Dr. Harris coming with Miss Sabra. Come, Martin Luther!" and away Teddy bounded, with the cat in full pursuit.

Dr. Harris had changed much since he was a school-boy, but the moment he addressed her in his old hearty way, Miss Belinda was sure she would have recognized him anywhere.

"I am glad to meet you again," he said, in a tone which left no doubt of his sincerity. "I remember of telling you, more than thirty years ago, that if I was in your place I would give up and not try to do any more, but I see you have kept on all the same."

"Yes, sir; I was obliged to keep on. There was work to be done which no one else would do."

"The lot fell upon you?"

"It did, Dr. Harris. I have wondered why it was such a lot, when I would have had it so different; but the good Lord knows all about it, if I don't. I fought against it until I learned my lesson; then I stopped fighting and prayed for strength and patience."

"I judge that you received it?"

"Yes, sir. I was never confined to my bed for a day in my life until I was left alone with no one dependent upon me."

"Then your family are all dead?"

"Yes, sir; and when they were gone I grieved because I had ever thought it hard

to do for them. Mother was the last to go, and she has been dead five years. They have been long years too."

"Your pardon, Miss Mann, but how long

have you been lame?"

"Three years. I got a bad fall, and didn't have the care I needed; so I suffered more than I should with a good home and good nursing."

Further questions, kindly asked, elicited the fact that she had saved a little money, with which she paid her expenses while unable to work.

"It was a dark day when I spent my last cent and knew not how I was to earn another," said Miss Belinda, tears filling her eyes as she recalled what she had then suffered. "At last I remembered I had some straw in the house, enough for a boy's hat, and just as I finished it a boy came along who had lost a hat and was glad to buy mine. So I was provided for, and I have never been discouraged since then, 'though I have seen some pretty hard

times. Now I have this comfortable place, and perhaps I can do some good here."

"Good needs to be done, Miss Mann, and I know of no one better qualified to do it. I am sure you can teach Mrs. Fritter lessons of thrift and economy, and if it is possible to inspire her with anything like ambition and energy, you can do that."

"If I could walk, I could do a great deal more for myself and others. It was a terrible trial to me to be a cripple. I used to think I might grow better in time, but I have not gained any for a year, so I must content myself as I am."

"I am not sure of that," replied the doctor, who was a skillful surgeon, and who saw here the possibility of doing a great kindness. "I have an hour to spare this morning, and if you will regard this as a professional call, I will investigate your case and give you my opinion of it. It will cost you nothing, and I may possibly be able to help you. Will you tell me how you got the fall which crippled you?"

Miss · Belinda hesitated for a moment

and then said, in answer to this question:

"I have never told any one how I got that fall, but I will tell you. A drunken man knocked me down. He was a stranger. I never saw him before, and I have never seen him but once since. He was sorry for the accident. It was an accident, and I have tried not to blame him. I always hoped some good would come of it."

"What a curse liquor has been to you!"

"Yes, Dr. Harris, it has been the curse of my life. It has laid a burden upon me every day, and I don't know as I have done with it yet. Sometimes I have allowed myself to think what I might have done if it hadn't been for liquor, but it was my lot to be bound by it. The man who knocked me down came to see me a week afterward, and promised, with his hand on my Bible, never to drink any more liquor. Then he knelt down by my bed and I prayed for him. He said if he prospered I should hear from him."

"And have you heard?"

"No, sir; but I pray for him every night. He was a young man, who looked as though there ought to be something better before him than a drunkard's life."

This led the way to further conversation, and it was not long before Dr. Harris was able to judge intelligently of the extent of Miss Belinda's real misfortune. The want of proper treatment had left her in her present crippled condition, and he assured her that improvement was by no means impossible for her.

"If I could only throw away my crutch, I should be so happy," she exclaimed, with tears in her eyes. "I can never thank you enough. Your coming here has done me good already. It is not your first kindness to me. I remember when I went to school with my dress so patched that some of the boys began to laugh at me, and you took my part. It was my best dress, and it got so torn the night before, mother said I better not try to go to school any more that winter. But I couldn't bear to give up; so I mended my dress as well as I

could, and tried not to be ashamed of it."

"Was that the day you spelled us all down?"

"Yes, sir, it was, and after that I forgot all about the patches on my dress."

"Well you might. You were the brightest scholar in all that school. I used to wish I could see through a problem in arithmetic as quick as you could. Did you study at home?"

"Oh, yes, indeed. I studied nights after the rest were in bed. There was a fireplace in my room, and I could burn a pitch knot in one corner, so there wouldn't anybody but me see the light. I couldn't get candles, but I could pull the knots out of old pine logs, and I kept a good stock on hand; so I was sure of a light to study by. Sometimes I borrowed a book or a paper that I read in the same way."

Sabra Harris visited Mrs. Fritter and then came into Miss Belinda's room, which was so striking a contrast to the one she had left, she could not refrain from expressing the wish that such an example of neatness might have an effect upon others, adding:

"I have always thought this old house dingy and gloomy, but you have sunshine and brightness."

"There is plenty of sunshine for us all if we only give it a chance to come in," was replied. "In all my life I have not often lived in a house as good as this, but I never saw a place so bad that soap and water would not improve it. Teddy has ideas of his own, and I think things will improve as he grows more independent."

"If his brother was only like him there would be some hope for the family."

"Yes, Miss Harris, but don't blame John too much. He had a legacy that Teddy didn't have. I have watched him close, and I don't doubt he was born with a drunkard's appetite. That is a dreadful legacy which many a man leaves to his children when he don't leave them anything else but poverty and disgrace. I don't blame my brother as I used to, and

there was hard drinking in the family before my father's time. I am thankful there are none to come after us. Of course you believe in inherited tendencies, Dr. Harris."

"Certainly I do. One generation is largely responsible for the sins of the next. The law of heredity, established in Eden,

has never been repealed."

"That is another of God's dealings I fought against until I was growing hard and bitter. I didn't see the justice of my being made to suffer because somebody had done wrong before I was born. I don't see it now, but I know the Lord deals tenderly and mercifully with us all, even when His ways are darkest. He can make allowance for our shortcomings, and He helps us when we altogether forget Him. I know He does all that; and more than that He has done for me. My blessings far outnumber my afflictions. But I am talking too much of myself. I hope you will pardon me."

"We are glad to hear you talk of your-self," said Dr. Harris. "It is good some-

times to compare notes of our personal experience, and so find that we are not alone in our doubts and difficulties."

"I have often wondered if anybody else ever had so many as I have had. I have wasted a great deal of time in wishing things were different with me, and thinking how they might have been; but I have done with that now. You will wonder that such a poor girl as I was should have been ambitious."

"If you had not been ambitious, you would never have studied as you did. And let me remind you that it is not yet too late to realize some of your ambitions. While our faculties are unimpaired, we are never too old to learn, or to work for some desired end."

"I have seen Miss Belinda in a new light," remarked Sabra Harris to her father, as they drove homeward. "She will never seem to me again as she did when I went into her room this morning. What a grand and noble woman she might have been."

"She is none the less grand and noble because circumstances have been against her," replied the doctor.

"True, father, but under fostering influences she would have developed into rarer, sweeter womanhood. The fact that she was surrounded by people who neither appreciated nor understood her must have been one of her greatest trials, as well as one of her greatest hindrances to improvement."

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CHAPTER IV.

CHANCES.

JOHN FRITTER saw them, and so did Teddy, but it was too late to retreat; so they could only keep on, hoping to pass the group unmolested. Not so, however. As they came opposite Reegan's saloon, two young men who had evidently been watching for this opportunity, caught John by each arm and invited him to take a drink with them.

"You must come," they said. "You are getting too slow for anything; and besides, we can't do without you any longer. Come in and take a drink, for the sake of old times, if nothing else. It sha'n't cost you a cent, and we will treat the little one into the bargain."

"No, you don't," shouted Teddy, in reply to this offer. "I won't touch a drop

of the horrid stuff for anybody, and John sha'n't either, as long as I am with him. Shame on you. What do you want to make trouble for? Haven't you got any mothers, to feel bad about you, and isn't that enough, without making my mother feel worse than she does now? We have had one drunkard in our family, and that is enough. A family can't afford to have more than one."

"There never has been a drunkard in our family, that I know of, so there is a chance for me," was responded coarsely.

"I should think there was a big chance for you to be somebody real grand. My, don't I wish I had such a chance! You wouldn't catch me doing anything to spoil it, I tell you."

This speech of Teddy's, made as it was with a frankness and sincerity not to be misunderstood, called forth a round of applause from those who heard it.

"Your brother is lucky in having you to look after him. I wish I was as well off, but nobody cares what I do. So here

goes for a short life and a merry one"; and the speaker turned to enter the saloon, when Teddy sprang to him, and seizing his hand, exclaimed:

"I know of somebody who cares what you do."

"Who is it?" asked the young man, looking sharply into the eager, upturned face.

"God," said Teddy, softly. "Miss Sabra and Miss Belinda say He cares for every one of us. They care, too, and they are both trying to keep John from drinking. I promised to help him all I could, and I wish I could help you. Can't I? If you wouldn't drink liquor, you would be a good deal smarter than John. But I don't complain of him. Miss Belinda says we must take folks as they are, and make the best we can of them. The man who sells liquor makes the worst he can of folks; and I wouldn't let him make the worst of me, if I was in your place. Come, now, go home. I would."

"So would I, if I had any home."

"Come home with me and talk with Miss Belinda. She can talk almost as well as Miss Sabra."

By this time the crowd had dispersed, some going in one direction, and some in another; leaving John Fritter to move on at his pleasure. Teddy had been so much in earnest, that he had not stopped to think how a guest would be received in his poor home; but walked rapidly on, nothing doubting, until his new acquaintance said:

"I won't go any further, now, but perhaps I will call on you in a week or two. I am much obliged to you for what you have done for me. Keep a sharp lookout for your brother. If there were a dozen boys like you in town, the saloons would find it hard to stand against them."

"There, now, I am afraid he will go back to Reegan's and get drunk," sighed Teddy, looking wistfully to his brother.

"I guess not," answered John. "He ain't one of the worst ones."

"Seems to me they are all worst. I

wonder if I have got to fight liquor as long as I live. If I have, I must brace up and grow as fast as I can. I wish you would brace up and learn to say no."

"I can't brace up, Teddy. There ain't any use in my trying. It seems, all the time, as though I should tip over and never try to stand any more. My head swims 'round and 'round, when I'm in the mill, and if we weren't so poor, I wouldn't go there again. I'm awful slimsey, but I can't help it, Teddy. I wish I was different."

You may be sure poor Teddy echoed this wish. John had never shown any aptitude for general work; and it was only in the mill that he could earn the wages so necessary to the family. If he was to leave there, new arrangements must be made upon a smaller basis; and his young brother began at once to calculate the extent of their resources.

Their rent was paid a month in advance, and he could provide wood for the summer. As for food, he could live on the

coarsest and cheapest, if only his mother and John could have what they needed.

"I've got to earn a lot more of money," he said to Miss Belinda that evening. "Everything is coming right on my shoulders, and I wish they were ever and ever so much broader. John's head swims in the mill, and he hadn't ought to go there another single day. I wish there was something we could do together. It is too late for a garden; and if it wasn't, my old hen and chickens would scratch it all to pieces. I was afraid Martin Luther would kill the chickens, but he don't touch them."

"He has been too well trained for that.

If you had a hundred chickens, he wouldn't
touch them."

"I wish I had a hundred instead of ten, and I wish I had twenty hens. Then I could have something to sell, and John could take care of them. I'm afraid that is all he is good for. It comes pretty hard on a fellow like me to have so much to look after. I guess I should be discouraged if I had time."

"Being discouraged would only make things worse," replied Miss Belinda. "If the Lord gives you a work to do, He will give you strength for it. Your mother has been sewing straw to-day, and she has done very well. So she can soon earn some money."

"Then she will feel better. She can't worry so much when she is busy at work; and I guess, between us, we can keep ourselves and John, too. Oh, dear! I don't know what I should do if I didn't have you to talk to. Everything straightens right out as soon as I tell you about it, and if you will talk to mother about John we will try and get along without depending on him. I must give up going to school, but I will study every minute I can get, and sometimes, perhaps, you will help me. Now I have got things cleared up, I better go home, 'though I would rather stay here. Martin Luther, if you knew when you were well off, you would stay with your mistress instead of mousing 'round so much."

"I am not sure of that," responded Miss

Belinda. "Mousing is his business, and even a cat should be of some use in the world. He knows that I expect him to do his duty."

"Then I guess you expect me to do mine. So please give me a verse to sleep on and I will go."

"I will give you one I have slept on many a night when I was in great trouble. It is: 'Ask, and ye shall receive.' You can trust the promise. It never failed me."

"Then I will trust it, too, 'though it seems to me it might make a difference who asked."

Teddy needed some comforting assurance, for when he went to his bedroom he found John there, quite broken down and crying like a child.

"I've just got to give up," said the elder brother. "There ain't any use for me to try any longer. Seems as though there wasn't anything to me, only when I've just had some liquor. O Teddy, it is dreadful. I am glad you don't know; but our father was an awful drunkard, and what Miss Harris calls 'the curse' has come down to me."

"I am afraid that is it; but, Johnny, don't you think you'd feel better if you'd take the verses, the same as I do, and say them over till you feel God coming near to you?"

"I don't think He cares anything about me, 'though Miss Harris says He does. She don't know how bad I am."

"God cares for everybody. I know He does. The Bible says so. It seemed awful queer to me at first when Miss Belinda said He knew all about me and was watching me to see how I behaved; but I have got used to it now and it helps me right along. Shall I tell you my verse for to-night?"

"Yes," answered John, almost indifferently; but when Teddy repeated it his attention was aroused. "You ask for me," he then said; "I don't know how."

It was only within a few days that Teddy had prayed for himself, half doubtingly and in secret. His petitions were, at best, but broken utterances of his needs and desires; yet he could not refuse his brother's request. So he knelt by the low bed and prayed as best he could, while John listened as for his life.

To the tired boy, who slept soundly, morning came too soon. He seemed to have lost the night hours; yet he sprang up, ready for whatever the day might bring.

"You and I have got the family on our hands," he said to his mother, cheerfully, as she came into the shed where he was feeding his chickens. "It won't do to depend on John. If I can only keep him from drinking liquor, it is all I expect."

"You can, if you keep right around with him," was heard in response, startling both Mrs. Fritter and her son, the latter exclaiming:

"Who is there, and what do you want?"

"Want to see you," was replied, and the speaker coming forward, Teddy recognized him as the stranger in whom he had been so much interested the previous evening.

"Good-morning. I am glad to see you," said the boy. "I have been thinking about you."

"Glad of it, 'though I don't suppose you thought any good of me. You couldn't very well. But I came to tell you that I sha'n't trouble your brother any more. I am going to leave town on the first train this morning. I want to thank you, too, for what you said to me yesterday; it did me good."

"Did it?"

"Yes, it did, and I want you to write your name on a card so I can have it to remember you by."

"I ain't much used to writing, but I will write my name as well as I can if you will write yours."

"Agreed. I have some cards, if you have pen and ink."

"I don't believe we have got a pen fit to write with, but Miss Belinda has."

"Miss Belinda?"

"Yes; she is a lame woman that has two rooms in the house where we live, and she has the handsomest cat you ever saw. Halloa! Martin Luther, there you are. Come here and let us get a good look at you. There! isn't he a beauty?" asked Teddy, as Martin jumped down at his feet.

"Yes, he is, and his mistress is as good

as he is handsome," was replied.

"Why, did you ever see her?"

"Yes, and I should like to see her again."

"You can. She gets up real early in the morning. Likely she is reading her Bible this minute. That is what makes her so good. Come right in with me."

Mrs. Fritter left the shed the moment she saw a strange face, but she had hardly entered her kitchen when Teddy led the way to Miss Belinda's room. A rap on the door was answered with the usual "Come," and the next moment there was a glad exclamation:

"Why, Eddie Gorman, I am so happy to see you! Come nearer, so I can shake hands with you. I hope you have been a good boy since I saw you before." "I have been a very bad boy, Miss Belinda—so bad that I am ashamed to look you in your face."

"I am sorry for that, but your mother's boy is always welcome to my home. I have been thinking about you this very morning, and wishing you would come in and take breakfast with me, just as you used to."

"I never had any other breakfasts half so good as those were."

"That was because you had a good appetite. My breakfasts then were very plain."

"They did not seem so to me. O Miss Belinda, if you had stayed in the neighborhood, I shouldn't have made my mother so much trouble."

"Where is your mother, Eddie?"

"In the poorhouse."

"In the poorhouse! Your mother in the poorhouse! I would share my last crust with her rather than have her go there. It don't seem possible she should ever come to that." "I know it, and she won't be there much longer anyway. I am going to take care of her. I can earn enough to do it. I lost my place because I drank so much beer; but now I have done with beer, I can get the place back, and mother shall have a good home. There, Miss Belinda, I have told you the worst of it all at once. I didn't mean to, but seeing you I couldn't help it."

Miss Belinda made little reply to this, but as they sat at the table, on which she spread a hasty breakfast, her guest told her of his meeting with Teddy and the effect of the boy's words upon him. Then his old friend added her warnings and advice, so enforcing the lesson already learned.

A little later, cards were exchanged as tokens of remembrance, and Eddie Gorman went his way.

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CHAPTER V.

JANIE REEGAN.

"TEACHER; teacher."

Sabra Harris turned at sound of the appealing voice, which she recognized as that of Janie Reegan.

"Good-morning, Janie," she said, stopping for the child, who was hastening to overtake her. "Why, what is the matter?" she asked, quickly, as she caught sight of a little tear-stained face under a broadbrimmed hat.

"Oh, dear! I feel so bad, it seems as though I couldn't tell you," sobbed Janie. "I can't go to Sunday-school any more, and father won't let me say a word about it, either. It is because you called Johnny Fritter out of the saloon, and he don't go there any more. Some of the others that used to go don't go now, and I am real

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glad of it. I wish there wouldn't anybody ever go in there again, but—"

Here the child could say no more. Burying her face in her hands, she wept aloud until her grief had somewhat spent itself.

"That isn't all, either," she continued, when she could control her voice. "Father told mother to put every one of my temperance papers in the stove, and she did. But, teacher, there wasn't a single spark of fire in the stove, and Micky McGill pulled them all out and carried them home. Mother knew father meant she should burn the papers, but Micky wanted them, and they are all gone from me, just the same as though they were burned."

"Can Micky read them?"

"Oh, yes, teacher; he can read as well as I can. He is real strong temperance, too. His father buys drink of my father, but Micky knows how wicked it is. He wants to go to Sunday-school, but his father won't let him. Perhaps he can't keep the papers, but if he can't he is going

to give them to Teddy Fritter. I told him perhaps you would give Teddy a paper every month, as long as I can't have one."

"I shall be very glad to do so, Janie."

"Oh, thank you, teacher; Micky will be so glad, and the paper will do lots of good. Now I must run home just as fast as I can. Father would scold me awful if he knew I told you. You won't forget me, teacher, will you?"

"No, Janie, I shall think of you and pray for you every day; and if you are kind and pleasant at home, I presume your father will allow you to come to Sunday-school again by and by."

"Oh, if he only would, I would be so good. Mother feels almost as bad as I do, and little Pat says when he grows up to be a man he shall go to Sunday-school all the time, and he won't have any teacher but you."

At thought of little Pat's loyalty, Janie smiled, and while in this happy mood she parted from the teacher, who was to her the embodiment of all things pure and lovely.

Sabra Harris was hardly surprised at what she had heard; yet if something had been lost, something, also, had been gained. Teddy Fritter had told her that Reegan sold less liquor, without the opposite saloon taking any of his customers.

Teddy was on the alert for temperance news, rejoicing whenever he could make a favorable report; yet thus far he had declined all invitations to attend Sundayschool. He could not dress as other boys dressed, and he was too independent to accept charity from any one. Since he became acquainted with Miss Belinda his ideas of many things had materially changed, but he was still decided to earn his own clothes as well as his own food.

He was cutting wood when he saw Miss Harris, and without waiting for her to come to him, he threw down his hatchet and ran to meet her.

"I don't know what we are going to do with John," he said, after replying to her 'Good-morning' and answering several questions asked by her. "If I had a lot

of money I would hire your father to come every day and doctor him; but I haven't got only a quarter and our flour is almost gone. We are saving Johnny's money to pay rent. I couldn't get anything to do to-day, so I went down to the mill for some sidings. I can pay for them in work, and every little helps."

"Indeed it does, Teddy, and a boy as willing to work as you are will always find some way to help."

"I must find a way, because there isn't anybody else, only mother. Miss Belinda tells her how to make the most of everything, so we get along a good deal better than we used to. But, Miss Harris, I do wish you would tell mother to look on the bright side. It is awfully discouraging to me to have her cry and take on so."

"I will see what I can do," was replied; and, encouraged by this, Teddy went back to his work with a lighter heart.

"O Miss Harris, I was just wishing you would come," exclaimed Mrs. Fritter. "I am clear down again, and Johnny has given

up. If Johnny can't work, we can't live. Teddy tries to make me think we can, but what can he and I do, with Johnny here in the house?"

"You can do better than if he worked every day and spent his evenings in Reegan's saloon."

"That is what Miss Belinda says; but if we manage to get through this summer, what can we do next winter?"

It was useless to remonstrate with this woman; so, after a short call, during which Sabra Harris endeavored to turn attention to Teddy and his cheerful courage, she went to Miss Belinda, who greeted her brightly and cordially.

"This has been to me a wonderfully happy morning," said her hostess. "I slept better last night than I have any night before since I was hurt, and this morning I could almost walk without my crutches. I have to thank your father for that."

"He will be very glad to hear you are improving. I wish Mrs. Fritter would look on the bright side of things as you do."

"I wish so, too, but I don't know as she can. She has looked on the dark side so long, it is hard for her to change. She did better until John broke down; but you know she is one of the weak ones."

"I know she is, Miss Belinda, and John is still weaker."

"You may well say that. It would make your heart ache to see how he clings to Teddy, brave little fellow, working away from morning till night at whatever his hands find to do. He says he is going to church and Sunday-school just as soon as he can save the money to buy a decent suit of clothes. Reegan calls him 'Teddy, the priest.' I suppose you know there is trouble there?"

"I have seen Janie this morning."

"Poor child, she is having a hard time. Her father blames you and her for what he calls his bad luck. Your going to the saloon and the talk there was about it, made some young men stop and think. Have you seen the one who came home with John?"

"No, I have not."

"He was here last evening, looking at the vacant rooms in this house. It was rather late when he came, and I think they had all gone to bed in the other part of the house; so they know nothing about it."

"Has he kept his promise not to drink any kind of liquor?"

"He said he had, and I didn't see any reason to doubt his word. He said he had been at work for Mr. Ryeland, a carpenter, on a job about three miles from the village. Perhaps you know Mr. Ryeland?"

"I do. He is a member of our church, and he is a thoroughly good man. He has lately become interested in temperance, because of the dissipation of one of his nephews, so he will have the right influence over Henry Bedlow."

"I am glad to hear that. He ought to work for a man who is interested in temperance. So many men speak of drinking liquor, as though it was a matter of no particular consequence anyway." "I know it, Miss Belinda; and women speak in the same way, ridiculing in a mild way any one who makes a serious business of temperance work."

"Such men and women throw their influence all on the wrong side. Miss Harris, I don't envy you your youth or your education. I don't envy you your pleasant home or any of your possessions, but I can't help wishing, sometimes, that I had as many advantages for doing good as you have."

"Why, Miss Belinda, I never expect to do as much good in the world as you have done and will do. You have done what came in your way, but I am beginning to falter already. I think I can see what a girl, situated as I am, could do in a place like this."

"Then, Miss Harris, I am sure you will do it."

"I am ashamed to confess that I shrink from it."

"If you could realize, as I do, the horrors of liquor-drinking, you would not

shrink from doing all in your power to prevent it. It has a bad look to see men lounging around places where liquor is sold, spending time and money for what will ruin them, soul and body; but such as you have no idea how terrible it is for the women and children belonging to them, when these men go home. You think you couldn't bear it; but women as delicate as you are, bear it year after year. I don't say it was as hard for me to live as I did at your age as it would be for you; but sometimes I was wicked enough to almost wish I could die and get away from it."

"I don't wonder. I wish I was as brave as you are, Miss Belinda."

"Wish you were as brave as Teddy Fritter. He doesn't know how he is to get enough to eat from one day to another, but he expects to earn it in some way; and now he has another plan he will consult you about as soon as it is all clear in his own mind. It won't do for me to tell you what it is, and perhaps I ought not

to have said what I have; but I hope you will be willing to help him."

"I will help him all I can."

"That will be enough. Miss Harris, did you ever think that somebody ought to get the children together and talk to them about the different kinds of liquors, so they will know what it is that makes so much trouble? They ought to know what liquor costs, in dollars and cents; and what it costs in misery, too, as far as they can without learning by experience."

"I have thought of it. When I was away last winter I attended some children's temperance meetings, and I was surprised at what I saw and heard. The meetings were conducted entirely by girls and boys under fifteen years of age, and they knew more about the effects of alcohol than I did. Nearly every one had some item of interest to relate, and at one of the meetings two boys came in for the first time who had been found drunk back of a low saloon. The saloon-keeper hired them to do a job of work and paid them in the vilest kind of

liquor. Then he drove them out, to freeze or take care of themselves as best they could."

"That is like a liquor-seller. He never misses a chance to gain a customer, and nothing makes him so angry as to have anybody try to reform a drunkard or save the boys from becoming drunkards. If Christians were only as anxious to do good, as such men are to do evil, the world would soon be converted."

"It certainly would. Christians are recreant to their duty, leaving sin unrebuked and sinners unwarned. I needed to be reminded of my duty, and I thank you for setting it plain before me. I came over this morning to ask you what can be done for John Fritter."

"I don't see anything to be done for him, except to feed and clothe him and let him do as he pleases. He can be trusted with Teddy, as far as liquor is concerned; but I think he will never get much above where he is now. It is dreadful for him to live and be always craving some kind of strong drink; and it would be more dreadful for him if he had the drink."

"Why, Miss Belinda, do you believe he will always have that craving?"

"I don't know. I have heard of such instances, and—and—I believe I have seen them."

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CHAPTER VI.

TEDDY'S TEMPERANCE SOCIETY.

"You are as like grandmother as a person no older than you are can be," remarked Elva Harris to her sister, who was still loyal to the motto involving much of actual self-denial and labor. "If you once make up your mind, it is as unalterable as the laws of the Medes and Persians."

"I am glad to be like grandmother," replied Sabra; adding: "I am sorry to disappoint you, but I should be more sorry to disappoint Teddy."

"I don't believe it would make any difference with him, if you should go to-morrow evening instead of this evening. The party at Mr. West's can not be post-poned; and as the reporters say, it will be the social event of the season. Do be reasonable for once, Sabra, and come with

me. The Wests count on you for music, and will be greatly disappointed if you fail them."

- "I told Susan I had a previous engagement."
- "I told her I thought you could be induced to set that aside. She said the evening would be quite spoiled for Angus if you were not there. At any rate, you might leave Teddy, after making him a short call, and then come to Mr. West's."
- "I can not promise to do even that," was responded, and Elva said no more in regard to the evening, until an hour later, when she asked:
- "Do you expect to organize a temperance society, with Teddy Fritter for president?"
- "I don't know who will be president, but I hope to help organize a temperance society of some kind."
- "O Sabra, don't. Susan West says everybody is talking of what you have done already; and if any other girl had done it, she would be cut at once. But

you are such a favorite it will be overlooked if you stop now."

"I shall not stop now."

"Then—But it is of no use to talk. I suppose you care for neither the Wests, the Lathams, or the Darnleys."

"In one way I care for them all. They are pleasant people to meet, but not one of them has any regard for religion. Not one of them, either, has any regard for what I consider temperance principles. They believe in wine and champagne, and the young men of the families would consider it no disgrace to be seen in a state of positive exhilaration from the use of their favorite drinks. Angus West sneers at what he calls the folly of temperance fanatics."

"That must be a mistake, Sabra. He is too much of a gentleman to sneer at any one. He could hardly help being a gentleman, with his handsome face, fine figure, and independent fortune."

"No one of these qualifications would make him a gentleman."

"We won't discuss him any further. You know Ruth Eastwood and her brother are invited this evening, and it must be out of regard to you; you and Ruth are so intimate. She will feel quite like a stranger, if you are not there."

All which, however, made no change in the decision of Sabra Harris. Promptly at half-past seven she opened the door to Miss Belinda's room, where six boys were waiting to receive her. There were Teddy Fritter, Micky McGill, Will Dunster, Fred Lawrence, Barney Burns, and last, as well as least, Micky's little brother Oney.

"We want to be a temperance society, and want you to be at the head of it," said Teddy. "We all know what a promise means, and we know how to keep one, after it is made."

"Yes, we do," piped in Oney, who had been thoroughly instructed in regard to the object of this meeting.

"We are going to ask girls to come in as soon as we get started," added Micky

loftily, nothing troubled by the fact that his trousers were far too short, while the sleeves of his shirt were several inches too long.

His face was radiant; his eyes sparkled, and his slight form fairly quivered with the intensity of his emotion, as he considered the importance of the occasion. Teddy had told him it would help to make a man of him, and there was nothing he desired so much as to be a man.

Although Teddy was very mysterious in giving his invitation, Sabra Harris had expected something of this kind, and was therefore prepared. She had taken with her a copy of the constitution and by-laws of the society whose meetings she had attended the previous winter. These she read; and after some questions had been asked and answered, they were pronounced satisfactory.

She then described the meetings; telling the boys that, while it was easy to begin, it would require hard work to keep up the interest. They wished Miss Harris

to act as president; but as she declined, Teddy Fritter accepted the office, upon condition that she would help them in every way possible.

Then there was a pledge to be signed; and if the signatures lacked distinctness, each boy was ready to swear to his own, should there be any question in regard to them. It was voted to continue the meetings but an hour; so at half-past eight Miss Harris was left alone. Yet not for long. Presently, as Miss Belinda came into the room, she exclaimed:

"Without crutches!"

"Without crutches!" was repeated joyously. "I have not used them for two days, and I am so happy over it, it almost seems as though I could fly."

"We will all rejoice with you. Teddy said he could tell me some good news, but he thought he had better leave it to you."

"He always has good news to tell, if it is nothing more than that he is alive. He worked hard to get the boys together this evening, and there are others he will try

for. He will be likely to succeed, too. Children can be easily interested in temperance, and their enthusiasm will almost always spread to the older people. McGill is a hard drinker, but Micky expects to reform him, and I hope the boy will not be disappointed. Of course, Teddy told me this, and I suppose Micky told him. I am glad he could come here this evening."

"I am glad I could come, Miss Belinda."

"You could hardly refuse, after being invited to come to something very important. I think it was a serious matter with Teddy to decide what words he should use in asking you. I heard him talking to Martin Luther about it several times."

"Martin Luther is one of his particular friends."

"Yes, Miss Harris, but Martin is on more intimate terms with John. When Teddy is away, Martin seems to feel that he is responsible for John."

"Poor John! Father says he sees no chance for him to improve. It sometimes seems to me that it would be a mercy for him to die now, rather than live to suffer, as I suppose he must."

"If his life is prolonged, it will be for some purpose. He may have a work to do in the world which no one else can do as well, or there may be others who need to learn a lesson from him. It may be that Teddy needs him, as I am very sure he needs Teddy."

"It may be that I need him, Miss Belinda. My first attempt at temperance work was made with him. He did me a favor the first time I ever saw him, and when I found him in trouble I tried to help him. Do you know that he is fond of flowers?"

"I have thought so, although they have none in the garden or in the house."

"But he knows the haunts of the wild flowers. I was out botanizing one day when I saw a flower on a cliff above me, and while looking around for some way to reach it, I caught sight of John Fritter, who was looking at the same flower, and who brought it to me as carefully as if he

feared to hurt it. He was very shy, but I succeeded in getting him to talk a little; and ignorant as he was of books, I found he could teach me a great deal in regard to wild flowers."

"If he loves flowers and knows so much of them, that is just where we must begin with him. He must have seeds and slips, and boxes to plant them in. Flowers will do well in the south windows of his mother's kitchen."

"So they will, Miss Belinda. I wonder I never thought of that before. I will furnish him with whatever he needs for the cultivation of house plants, and I will offer him some inducements to bring me wild flowers."

Punctually at nine o'clock, Dr. Harris called for his daughter, stopping no longer than was necessary to rejoice over the success of the treatment he had prescribed for his old friend.

"I have just heard that you declined an invitation to Mr. West's for this evening," he said, as he drove away from the house.

"Your mother told me about it, and I wish Elva had not cared to go. I am very sorry David Eastwood was invited there. Angus West is not a safe companion for him."

"He has too much principle to be influenced to do wrong," answered Sabra.

"He has more than the average young men have, but his principles have not yet been put to a severe test. He has had to work his way so far; and here, at home, there have not been many temptations for one like him. But there has come into our society a new element, which can not fail to have a strong influence upon some of our young people. There is a laxness in religious principle, and an utter want of anything like true temperance principle. I fear it will work us evil."

"It must be combated, father, and I have faith to believe it will be. The question with me is, What ought I to do?"

"All that you can, my daughter. It is time for every Christian woman, young or old, to throw her whole influence against the drinking habits of what is called society, as well as against absolute drunkenness. It is no worse for some to drink whiskey in Reegan's saloon than for others to drink wine and champagne in a wellfurnished apartment, called 'the smokingroom.'"

"Of course it is not; but please, father, what has stirred the waters this evening?"

"Not an angel, Sabra. I have been called to prescribe for a young man who has been under the influence of one of our young gentlemen for the last few weeks, and who is now paying dear for what some would consider elegant companionship. I don't wish to call any names, but we must bestir ourselves to avert the threatened danger. Life is something more than a farce, and Christian profession should be something more than a mere formality."

"But, father, it is often hard to know what is one's duty."

"When there is any question, be sure to lean on the safe side. We are too apt to throw the responsibility on others, so that in the end things are left to take their own course. I have done that too much myself, but I hope to do better in future. Now tell me what important business Teddy had on hand this evening."

In response to this, Sabra Harris gave her father a report of what had transpired, adding:

"Teddy wants the society to be managed the same as what he calls 'a grown-up society.' Some one remarked to him, in a careless way, that a dozen boys like him could do a good deal toward shutting up the saloons in town; and he is looking for the dozen boys."

"I hope he may find them. A dozen wide-awake boys, thoroughly in earnest on the temperance question, could do a great work; but a dozen young ladies, fully alive to the needs of the hour, and willing to come out boldly, yet modestly, as the defenders and preservers of our homes, could do an almost infinitely greater work."

"Father, can you think of a dozen young ladies in this town who would do that?"

"There *ought* to be as many as that. There must be as many who are members of our churches, and temperance work is true church work."

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CHAPTER VII.

THE FIRST GLASS OF WINE.

IT was plain to Sabra Harris that the evening had not been what her sister anticipated; yet she asked no questions. To her mother she gave a detailed account of what had transpired in Miss Belinda's room; but it was not until Ruth Eastwood was seen coming down the street, that Elva made any allusion to the evening. She then said hastily, and with evident reluctance:

"Ruth will have a long story to tell you; and I may as well acknowledge, first as last, that if I had known beforehand what would happen, I should not have gone to Mr. West's. I make no pretension to any extra goodness, but I don't believe in tempting people to do what you know their consciences will condemn."

With these words, she left the room which Ruth Eastwood soon entered; the troubled face of the latter calling forth from her friend the exclamation:

"Why, Ruth, what has happened?"

"Almost the worst which could happen," was replied, with a burst of tears.

"I hope not so bad as that," responded Sabra.

"It may prove to be. It is the first step which costs, and the first glass which leads to drunkenness. Would you believe it, Sabra, my brother drank his first glass of wine last evening. I wish you had been there. I am sure he would not have done it in your presence."

"Did others drink?" asked Sabra Harris, too much surprised to notice the compliment of her friend.

"I think every one, except myself, tasted of wine. Some drank, as a matter of course, while others followed their example from a false sense of courtesy, or the want of courage to make themselves conspicuous by refusing. Susan West in-

sisted upon David's drinking with her; and if you had seen her as she waited for him to take the glass from her hand, you would hardly wonder that he yielded. I never saw her when she looked half so charming. She was like a beautiful—But I will not say it. Calling hard names will not undo the evil she has done."

"It may be you overrate the evil. Because your brother has once tasted of wine, it is no reason why he should taste again."

"But, Sabra, the curse is on our family."

These words were whispered hoarsely; and in the same whisper Ruth Eastwood continued:

- "I have heard father say that no one of our name can drink moderately. The appetite, once aroused, will sweep everything before it."
 - "Does David know it?"
- "Yes, but he must have forgotten it last evening."
- "What does he say about it this morning?"

"Nothing; and I could not make up my mind to mention it. What shall I do?"

"I can not tell you," answered Sabra Harris; thinking not only of David Eastwood, but of others; her own sister among the number.

"I can not go to mother, and father is out of town. He will not be at home for a week. What would you do if David was your brother?"

"I will tell you what I think I should do. I think I should entreat him to listen to me, until he would allow me to say what I pleased to him; and then I should try to have him promise never to taste another drop of intoxicating drink as long as he lives. I am sure he would not break a promise."

"No; he would not do that. It must be that he regrets what he has done, but he may not be willing to acknowledge it, and I am not willing to risk displeasing him."

"Then leave it to your mother. She has a great influence over him, and perhaps

she will know, better than you, how to approach him."

"If she was our own mother, it would be different. If I should tell her what father has said, I might be giving her an item of our family history he would prefer to keep from her. She is very pronounced in her ideas of total abstinence; and I have heard her say, more than once, that nothing could induce her to marry a man who was not in sympathy with her on temperance and religion."

"So much the better for you, Ruth. I am very sorry for you, and I would do anything in my power to help you, but your mother can do what I can not."

The whole matter wearied Sabra Harris. For once, she wished her friend away, so that she could take counsel with herself. David Eastwood's lack of firmness revealed him to her in a new light. His sister's next remark closed with a question she found it difficult to answer.

"If any one in the world can influence David, you can. You know that, don't you?"

"I know we have been good friends, and I hope we shall remain so," she replied after some delay.

"Why, Sabra, I supposed you knew he cares more for your favor and friendship, than for that of any one else in the world. If you fail me, I shall be discouraged."

"The more I think of it, the more I think you should go to your mother. She will be likely to hear that wine was drank at Mr. West's, even if you do not tell her."

"I wish she would hear of it before I go home, and speak to me about it; although I should hardly know what to say to her then."

"You must remember that she is a Christian, Ruth, and a Christian can be trusted in any emergency. The Wests make no pretensions to religion."

"I know it. I wish they had not invited us to their house last evening. Elva said you were detained by a previous engagement."

Sabra Harris, to whom a change in the subject of conversation was a great relief, proceeded to give a graphic description of

Teddy Fritter's temperance society, as it was then and as he hoped it would be in the future. She repeated, also, what her father had said in regard to the influence of twelve young ladies banded together for temperance work.

"Count me one of the twelve, and let us organize this very week," said Ruth Eastwood. "We ought not to be behind the boys. Will Elva join us?"

"I think so. I certainly hope so," replied Sabra.

"I know we can count on Lucy Harvey and Annis Strong. They will make five, and—why, Sabra, before mother was married to father she was president of a ladies' temperance society."

"Then she will be a good president for us, and we shall feel more confidence if we have some older ladies enlisted with us. Mother will join. I can speak for her, and we can organize with seven members, if we can have no more."

"When shall we organize?"

"We must think about that. I will talk

the matter up here at home, and you talk with your mother about it. After the prayer-meeting this evening we will com-

pare notes."

"That will be a good way to do. I begin to feel better. This morning it seemed as though the whole world was under a cloud; but you always help me to look on the bright side. When I heard of your going into Reegan's saloon for John Fritter, I wished I had courage to do such a thing. David said there wasn't another girl in town who would have done it.

"It had a great influence. Some one told father that Reegan said your call had cost him fifty dollars every week since you made it. His customers are, most of them, men who work hard for their living; but he makes such profits on what he sells, that the loss of a few makes a very decided difference with him."

"I trust his loss has been gain to others."

"Certainly it has, Sabra. I wish I could see Miss Belinda you have told me so much about."

"I will take you to see her, and it has just occurred to me that I will ask her to join our temperance society. She will be a great addition, as well as a positive inspiration. Mrs. Ryeland, too; she is so grieved at the disgrace of their favorite nephew that she will be ready to lend us her influence."

One name suggested another until, before the young ladies separated, they had quite a long list of those for whose cooperation they hoped.

When Ruth Eastwood reached home, she found there a neighbor who was never known to miss an opportunity to carry evil tidings wherever they would be most unwelcome.

"Is that woman to be believed?" asked Mrs. Eastwood, as soon as the door was closed behind her.

"I should not like to accuse her of telling a falsehood," was replied.

"I hope what she has just told me was a falsehood. She said every young man at Mr. West's, last evening, drank so much wine as to be actually intoxicated."

"That is not true, mother, although every young man there drank wine."

"Did David drink wine?"

"Yes, mother; it was the first time."

"Pray God it may be the last. It must be the last. Your father has told me that it is not safe for any one of his name to tamper with any kind of alcoholic drink. Does David know that?"

"Yes, mother, he does."

"Then may God pity and forgive him, as I shall try to. It would kill your father if David should go wrong, and I could hardly bear it. I never thought to suffer in that way. I must talk with David about it. How could he do so?"

For answer to this, Ruth told their mother how he had been tempted; apologizing for him as best she could.

"I can see that it would have been hard for him to refuse, but——"

At this moment Mrs. Eastwood was interrupted by the appearance of David, who opened the sitting-room door, where, seeing his mother and sister, he was about to retreat, when the former said: "If you can give me half an hour of your time, I should like to discuss another plan with you."

So many plans had been discussed by these two, that the young man, not suspecting what followed, assured his mother that he was at her service for as long a time as she might desire his company. Ruth made an excuse for leaving them, and in her chamber awaited anxiously the result of the interview. At the end of two hours, feeling sure that her presence would not be considered an intrusion, she went below stairs, where she was greeted cordially.

"David agrees with me, and I think we shall be able to carry out our plans to the entire satisfaction of all concerned," remarked Mrs. Eastwood, with a smile.

"I am very glad," answered Ruth. Then, turning to her brother, she said: "Mother's plans are always so wise, the best thing we can do is to agree with them."

"Amen, as Elder Harbro says. You

know as well as I do, sister, that when a fellow has made a fool of himself, he doesn't want to say much about it; but I can promise you that, while mother lives, she will never have occasion to talk to me again as she has this morning. If some young ladies were only as active in recruiting for the teetotal ranks as others are in their efforts to make wine-drinking popular here in our town, they might accomplish more good than they can quite realize.

"Reegan is not the worst man among us. A young man could be persuaded to enter a well-furnished club-room, who would consider himself forever disgraced should he once be seen in a low drinking-saloon."

"Is there such a club-room in the village?"

"One will be opened this evening."

"Do you belong to the club?"

"I do not, but I have been invited to the opening of their room; and I presume it is expected that I will so far appreciate the honor thus done me, as to pay my dues and become one of the privileged order."

"Don't do it, brother."

"Of course I shall not, after what I have promised mother; but you young ladies better set up an opposition as soon as may be."

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CHAPTER VIII.

THE OPENING OF THE CLUB-ROOM.

Two young men usually present at the prayer-meeting were absent from their accustomed places. They did not profess to be Christians; but having been trained to respect and reverence religion, they willingly lent their aid to the service of song; thus adding much to the general interest of all religious meetings.

Sabra Harris, who presided at the organ, was quite able to lead the singing; yet she missed the strong tenor voices which had so long accompanied her own. Even the clergyman seemed under some depressing influence; so that it was with a sigh of relief he left the platform and came down among his people when the meeting had closed.

"Miss Sabra, something must be done, (104)

and I shall depend upon you to do it in the best way," he said as he passed her, while hastening to speak with her father and mother.

"Arthur and William must have gone to the club-room," remarked Ruth Eastwood a moment later.

"I am afraid so," was replied. "Father told us about the club-room, and said there was almost sure to be wine-drinking there. It is just as sure, too, that those who started the club will do all in their power to make it popular, and wine-drinking with it. Something must be done to counteract their influence, and create a strong temperance sentiment in our village, or the young men and boys will be ruined."

"What of the young women and girls?"

"They will suffer too. The whole community will suffer. It must not be, Ruth."

"That is what mother says. She is ready to tell us what she knows about the work of women's temperance societies, and she will do everything she can in every way. She thought we better get together

as many as we can who are interested, and make some plans for work. Then we could try and enlist others. I told her about Miss Belinda, and she said we must certainly have her present."

"Then we must go to Miss Belinda's room. She will be glad to see us, and her room is so neat and clean, we shall not mind its plainness. Mother will like to go there, and I am sure your mother will find Miss Belinda a pleasant acquaintance."

These friends lingered a little, then moved on to join Mrs. Harris, whose husband had been summoned from her side. David Eastwood had waited outside for his sister, and presently they all walked on together, but it was not until they reached the home of Dr. Harris, that any allusion was made to temperance work.

"You can not begin too soon; and as far as I am concerned, I wish you had begun several weeks ago," said David Eastwood, in response to a remark made by Mrs. Harris.

"Shall we begin with you?" asked Sa-

bra pleasantly.

"My mother began with me, and finished the work so completely, that nothing remains for another to do," he replied. "I gave myself credit for having some decision of character, yet when put to the test I discovered my mistake; but I learned a lesson that will not need to be repeated."

"To acknowledge a fault implies repentance; to avoid a repetition of the fault proves the repentance to be sincere," said Mrs. Harris, thus breaking an awkward silence, and also reassuring the young man, who felt that he had forfeited the esteem of his friends.

As no one seemed inclined to continue the conversation, they bade each other good-night and separated.

"I am glad you have come," said Elva, as her sister entered the room where she was sitting alone.

"Have you been alone all the evening?" was asked in reply.

"Susan West was in for a few minutes,

but I think she must have thought me very poor company. She wanted to talk about last evening, and I never want to hear it mentioned. She said the Lathams will have a party, next week, and we shall be invited. I did not tell her so, but I hope something will happen to give me an excuse for declining the invitation. I have no wish to repeat the experience of last evening. I wish you had been there, to keep me from acting foolishly. I never tasted a drop of wine before, and I never intend to taste it again. It was ill-bred in the Wests to have wine, when they know, well enough, that people here never provide it at entertainments."

"No one was obliged to drink it, Elva."

"I know that as well as you do, Sabra, but every one except Ruth Eastwood did drink it, and Susan West said it was very rude in her to refuse. Did Ruth tell you about David?"

"Yes, she did."

"Well, Susan West the same as compelled him to drink with her, and the meanest part of it was that she boasted to George Darnley of her intention. I am not certain, but I think they had a bet on it. If you had been there, you would have saved David Eastwood. It is plain to me that your duty was in Mrs. West's parlors instead of in Miss Belinda's room."

- "I do not think so. I am glad I went to Miss Belinda's room, and I expect to go there again soon, to help organize another temperance society. Will you join it, Elva?"
- "I don't know. What will be expected of its members?"
- "Total abstinence from all distilled and fermented drinks, with a readiness to work in every possible way for the suppression of liquor-drinking and liquor-selling."
 - "Even to visiting liquor-saloons?"
- "Yes; that comes within the limits of the pledge. It is possible to be done."
- "But I would never do that. It makes a woman too conspicuous."
- "Hardly more conspicuous than drinking wine under some circumstances."

"For mercy sake don't say anything about that, Sabra, and don't say any more about temperance. I am tired of it. I believe I am tired of everything. I have half a mind to go to grandmother's and spend a month. I think she would be glad to see me, and perhaps I should come back in better humor. You can spare me as well as not."

"I shall miss you; but you can brighten up the old house for grandmother, and make her very happy."

"I will certainly try to do so, if father and mother will consent to my going."

Their consent was easily obtained, and before the week closed Elva Harris had been welcomed at the old homestead, where she fancied no vexed questions would intrude to mar her pleasure.

Meanwhile there was a general canvass among those ladies likely to engage in active temperance work; resulting more favorably than the most sanguine had dared to hope. A society was organized, with a full quota of officers. Mrs. Eastwood was

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chosen president; Mrs. Harris and Mrs. Ryeland, vice-presidents; Sabra Harris, secretary and treasurer; while she, with five others, constituted a visiting committee, whose duties were varied, yet distinctly understood.

The society was to meet each week for conference, consultation, and prayer. Once a month there was to be a public meeting, intended to be attractive and of general interest, and when it was expected that others would be induced to join them.

"We have made a good beginning," said Ruth Eastwood to her mother, upon their return home from Miss Belinda's room, which was already known as "Temperance Headquarters."

"Yes, but the beginning is often the easiest part of the work," was replied. "It requires hard thinking and persistent effort to keep a society up to the mark. Every member needs to do her best. In our public meetings, especially, each one must feel responsible, although we shall depend very much upon our young ladies."

"O mother, if only Miss Belinda would tell her story, everybody would be interested. I thought she ought to be one of the officers of the society, and I know she will do as much good as any one. She can speak from experience, and Dr. Harris says there are very few men or women who would have done as well as she."

Teddy Fritter told Sabra Harris that Miss Belinda was a whole society all by herself. Perhaps there was no other one in the community so delighted at what had been done as was Teddy, who expressed his delight in a characteristic manner.

"Won't the liquor-men feel mean, and won't they lose their customers!" he exclaimed, swinging his old straw hat. "I tell you, Micky, it is a big thing to have two temperance societies started so near together; but I am glad ours was the very first. Queer president, though, I am, beside Mrs. Eastwood. But, Micky, we'll do our best, and I have got two more to join us. Have you got anybody?"

"Not yet; but there's three I'm working

for, and give me time, I'll fetch them. One of them is my own cousin, and cousin, too, to little Pat Reegan. His uncle gave him some whiskey, once, and after that, his mother said she'd just fight the saloon all she could, no matter if it was her brother that kept it. But do you mind, Teddy, there's a club-room in Whalan's block where the swells go to play billiards, and such like games. I heard somebody say they would have wine there; so I expect they'll smoke and drink, same as poor fellows, only have it cost more."

"Yes, Micky, and when they get drunk they are just as bad. Miss Belinda says so. The temperance papers say so too. The rich men swear just as bad as the poor ones, too; for I have heard them. Micky, what do you think about being a real out-and-out Christian, such as Miss Harris and Miss Belinda are?"

"What is being a Christian? Is it being on the square every time?"

"Yes, and praying; asking God to help you do right, and keep you from doing wrong. I have to pray; because, you see, I have got so much on my hands I never could get along if I didn't. Miss Belinda says she could'n't, either."

"Does Johnny pray?"

"He tries to, but he is so slimsey and discouraged, he don't half believe he is going to get what he prays for."

"Do you believe?"

"Of course I do. I know the help is coming. I am looking now for better jobs, so I can earn more money, and I pray about that."

"Well, now, I should like to hear you, so I can learn how."

"Come right to my praying-place. Miss Belinda says it is a good plan to have a particular place; so I have, and it always seems as though I could pray better there than anywhere else."

In a corner of the barn chamber these two boys knelt; one praying for needed blessings, while the other listened eagerly and reverently.

"Makes a fellow feel good, don't it?"

said the latter, as they rose from their knees. "I won't forget it, and I'll be looking to see if you get what you asked for. You'll tell me all about it, won't you?"

"Yes, I will, and mind, now, I'm expecting it soon."

"Have you got better jobs?" asked Micky, when he met his friend two days after this conversation.

"Not yet, but I am expecting them," was replied cheerfully. "I have had one chance that I wouldn't take. It was in the club-room. I don't know what they wanted of me there, but I know I wouldn't go. It was half a dollar for two hours' easy work, but I am going to earn half a dollar some other way if I can. If I can't I'm bound to feel rich, all the same; because Johnny is going to earn some money.

"He is learning to braid straw, and there is a man wants every yard he can get. Mother braids, too, but it was Miss Belinda who thought about Johnny doing it. He likes it, and Miss Belinda says the last yard he braided is good enough to sell."

CHAPTER IX.

WORSE THAN DEAD.

In leaving home, Elva Harris had hoped to leave everything unpleasant behind her; especially did she hope that no allusion would be made to temperance, or intemperance. But she was doomed to disappointment. The next morning after reaching her grandmother's, she overheard some part of a conversation which led her to ask:

"Is any one dead?"

"Worse than that," was replied. "Morley Leighton is in the old Mann house, dead drunk; lying on a miserable, dirty straw bed, beside Jerry Simpkins."

"Morley Leighton dead drunk!" repeated Elva, an expression of intense surprise upon her face. "How can that be?
He couldn't be like old Jerry Simpkins. It
must be a mistake."

"A terrible mistake, but Morley is there. His father has been to look after him, and he is to be carried home."

"Why, grandmother, I used to think Morley Leighton was a perfect gentleman. His sister, too, was so agreeable, and so devoted to him."

"She is as devoted to him as ever, but she has very little influence over him."

"Such a beautiful home as he has, with plenty of money for everything he can desire; it does not seem possible that he should sink so low. I remember how delighted I used to be, when I was invited to Mrs. Leighton's. Morley was very polite. He used to give me cake, and a tiny glass of currant wine for lunch. He drank wine with me, and I thought he was delightful. He said his mother made the wine; so it could not possibly hurt me. Even Sabra saw no harm in drinking it."

"Mrs. Leighton saw no harm in making it, but she would no more make it now, than she would mix poison for her family. Morley began with her wine, and where he

will end no one knows. He is as bad as Jerry Simpkins. It is not the first time he has lain on the straw, too drunk to know or care what were his surroundings. I have wished, more than once, that the old house would burn down. There has always been a drunkard living in it, from Josiah Mann, down. Jerry owns it, and can not be driven out."

"Is that where Belinda Mann used to live?"

"Yes, it is; and a smarter girl than she was never lived in this town. She had a hard life, but she did the best she could, and deserved better of her family than she received. She was a drudge for every one of them. I always pitied her, and I have wished, a good many times, that I knew what had become of her."

Elva Harris could gratify this wish, but in talking of Miss Belinda, Morley Leighton was not forgotten.

The son of a wealthy man, holding a high official position, no advantage or assistance would have been denied him.

Talented, well educated, and possessed of pleasing manners, he had been a general favorite. Fastidious, too, in his tastes, and accustomed to the elegancies of life, he was the last one who would have been expected to choose the vilest drunkard in town as a boon companion.

But, as was generally said, there was not another low enough for him. There were young men who would drink one, and perhaps two glasses of liquor with him, but this only seemed to whet his appetite for more. Nothing less than positive intoxication would satisfy him, and even this must be prolonged by continued potations, whenever he was sufficiently aroused to be conscious of anything.

"He had probably started in for a three days' drunk," said a neighbor who was describing his condition. "He expected his father to be away for a week, but for some reason Mr. Leighton came back, this morning, before sunrise, and the first thing, he was looking after Morley."

"Old Jerry ought to be punished for

leading the boy off," replied the woman to whom these remarks were made.

"Old Jerry did not lead him off. Morley was seen going down there, early last evening, with a jug of whiskey, and the jug is not yet empty."

"The man who sold him the whiskey ought to be prosecuted, and punished to

the full extent of the law."

"Yes, but Morley would never betray the seller. That would be violating his code of honor. It is a terrible pity that he should do as he does. He is really kindhearted, and generous to a fault. He would share his last dollar with any one who seemed to need it."

"It is a pity he has so much money to spend. His mother is doing wrong, to let him have it."

"I don't know about that. He knows there is plenty of it in the family, and he would have no scruples about taking it. He would have it in some way. I tell you, Mrs. Morse, it is hard to know what to do with such a boy. He is a frank,

manly fellow, when he is sober; smart, too, the smartest fellow in town; but his terrible appetite for liquor is ruining him. I am waiting, now, to help his father about getting him home."

Not long after, Mr. Leighton was seen driving Morley's own horse, harnessed to a common express wagon in which was a large quantity of straw. The neighbor went out, and within half an hour the wagon was again driven past; this time containing Morley Leighton, who beyond calling for more whiskey, had seemed wholly unconscious of what was transpiring.

"He probably will not be seen again for weeks, except by his family," remarked Grandmother Harris, as she turned away from the window with a sigh. "Nobody knows the truth of it, but people think that sometimes when his spree, as they call it, is cut short, as it has been now, he is given liquor at home to prevent his being so furious."

"It is the most dreadful of anything I

ever heard," responded Elva. "I should think his pride would keep him from drinking in such a way, even if he had no principle about it. He was always so particular to dress handsomely, and in the latest styles; he would have been a fop, if he had not been too much of a gentleman. I have heard Sabra say that. She will be astonished to know he is such a sot."

"I presume he had been drinking to excess, long before it was generally suspected. His family kept it secret as long as possible."

"And do you really think, grandmother, that drinking currant wine gave him a taste for other wine?"

"Whether it gave him the taste, I can not say; but I am certain that it helped to strengthen it."

"But I never thought of currant wine as being real wine which could injure anybody. I knew it was a pleasant drink, and I liked it."

"I am afraid a great many others drank it without thinking."

"I remember you used to put it in mince-pies, and I thought it gave them a very nice flavor."

"Yes, but I learned better than that several years ago. I used to make wines and cordials of different kinds of fruit, and I have some in the house, now, to be used for sickness; but I shall never make any more. Mrs. Leighton says she would gladly give up every dollar she has in the world, if she could go back to the time when Morley was a baby, and begin over again with him. I haven't the same reason for wishing to go back to the time when my children were babies, but after the experience I have had, I should do very differently with them."

"Father is a strong temperance man."

"He ought to be. No physician, who is not a strong, consistent temperance man, ought to be allowed to practice. It is easy to prescribe wine or whiskey, as a tonic; but often the tonic proves to be a poison. It is better that a man should die without the tonic, than afterward to die with the

poison. Fortunately that is not the alternative."

"Why, grandmother, you are talking temperance, the same as your namesake. Sabra is almost a fanatic on the subject."

"I am glad to hear it. She, probably, has a long life before her, in which to do effective work, while I am almost through. Yet I shall do what I can, and so must you. You are not like Sabra, but you have your work to do in the world, which you can not delegate to another."

"Grandmother, I should think Helen Leighton might keep Morley from such low associates," said Elva Harris, anxious to prevent the conversation becoming more personal. "I used to think he was very fond of her."

"He is fond of her; but to gratify his appetite, he would sacrifice every friend he has. He is sacrificing them, and himself too."

"Of course he is not tolerated in respectable society."

"Yes, he is. When he is sober, there

is hardly a young lady in town who would refuse an invitation to drive with him, or attend a place of amusement with him. Sometimes he will keep sober for weeks, and even months; but I have noticed that the longer it is, the worse he drinks when he breaks loose again."

"I thought he was engaged to Patty Ainsworth."

"He was engaged to her. The arrangement was made by their parents, when they were children, and as they grew up, they were happy to confirm it; but after Morley drank so badly and so publicly, Patty claimed a release from her engagement. She told him she could never trust her happiness in his hands. She believed in total abstinence."

"Is her father a teetotaler?"

"No, he is not; but Patty is a girl to decide questions of principle for herself. She joined the Church two years ago, and if ever anybody tried to do their whole duty, she does."

"If she had promised to marry Morley Leighton, she broke her promise." "Yes, and she was justified in doing it. At first, Mr. and Mrs. Leighton blamed her, and tried to excuse Morley's dissipation by saying that the disappointment had made him reckless; but they are on good terms with her now."

"It must have been a great disappointment to him."

"Not so much as it was to her. It nearly broke her heart; but she was too sensible, and too sincere a Christian to allow it to spoil her life. She comes over to see me, once in a while, and I always feel the better for her visits."

"Did her father and mother approve of what she did?"

"Not at first. The families have always been great friends, and Mrs. Ainsworth was pleased with the prospect of having her daughter marry where there was so much money; but they have seen enough, since then, to convince them that Patty was right. If other young ladies would decide as she did, there would be fewer drunkards in the coming generations."

Elva Harris was tired of temperance, yet she found the subject uppermost in her mind, as well as in the minds of all around her. The next day the topic of interest was still the conduct of Morley Leighton, and the probable intention of his parents in regard to him.

The next week it was known that he had left town with his father; after which, life in his home, so far as it could be seen, went on as usual.

His sister called at Mrs. Harris', making an effort to appear cheerful, yet breaking down utterly as she arose to take her leave.

"Don't, child, don't. It won't do any good," said the old lady, folding the sobbing girl close in her arms.

"I know it, but how can I help it?" was responded. "What shall I do? How can I live, and know that my brother is a drunkard! It is more than I can bear."

"It is hard for you; but God will help you bear even that, if you ask Him."

"I have asked Him, and I have prayed

for Morley. I have tried, so hard, to have Morley do better; but it has been of no use."

"If you can not influence him, you must try to influence others. If you can not save him, perhaps you may be the means of saving others, and their souls are as precious as his."

"I know it, Mrs. Harris; but I have an especial duty with him."

"Our especial duty is to do all the good we can; not in our own way, but in God's way."

CHAPTER X.

A NEW DEPARTURE.

"A woman's temperance society is what I never expected to see in this town. Mrs. Leighton, too, is the one who started it; and they say Patty Ainsworth is sure to come into it heart and hand. Her father and mother don't really approve of it, but she is going to do what she thinks is her duty."

"I've heard the women were talking of having a society all to themselves, and for my part, I don't believe in it. They better attend to their home duties," was answered, somewhat sharply.

"Home duties have a wide range," said the first speaker. "It is time something was done to stop so much liquor-selling and liquor-drinking. You certainly must acknowledge that."

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"Then let the men do it."

"But they will not do it. They have shirked the responsibility. They have excused themselves, and apologized for doing nothing, until at last they stopped even that. It is now five years since we made any pretensions to having a working temperance society. I am glad the women are going to take the matter into their own hands. They are the right ones to do it. There isn't very often a glass of liquor drank, when some woman does not suffer for it, sooner or later. There is Mrs. Leighton and Helen wearing themselves out with worrying over Morley. They better be doing what they can to save somebody else from suffering as they do."

"You may be right. I don't want to put a straw in the way of any good work; but it is against my ideas of woman's place to have her coming out quite so public. Folks say they are going to call a meeting, right off, in the town-hall, and make speeches, and pray over it, the same as men."

"I hope they will pray better than the men who ask the Lord to stop the evil of intemperance, and never lift a hand themselves, to help stop it. There has been too much such praying."

"I am not going to dispute you; but woman has her place and man has his."

"Ten years ago, I should have said that woman's place was at home, caring for her house and her children if she had them; but an enemy threatens her home, and she has no choice in her modes of defence. She must do all she can in every way she can, or the homes of our country will be despoiled. Our town is small, yet we have had a great deal of trouble with liquor."

"Perhaps we have, 'though I never thought of it in that way. We haven't many drunkards among us. There is Jerry Simpkins—"

"He is always quoted, but there are men in town worse than he. He is a hard drinker, but he is the most harmless drunkard that has ever occupied the old house. He has no one depending upon him, while the others have had families. You remember John Mann. He was a hard drinker, and a hard man in every way. His son was as bad as he was, and his wife was too much discouraged to try to make things better. If it hadn't been for Belinda, they would have starved or frozen."

"She was a smart girl."

"Yes, but her father and brother just kept her down where she couldn't do more than keep soul and body together. Women have the hardest of liquor-drinking anyway. No matter how bad a drunkard a man is, he expects some woman to make things comfortable for him, even if he don't provide a cent to do it with.

"One winter, when the Manns lived in the old house, Belinda got most of the wood they had to burn, out of Mr. Dean's wood-lot. I have seen her dragging it on an old hand-sled many a cold, frosty morning before light. Sometimes she would get her brother started with her, but generally she had to go alone. "You and I don't know what women have to bear with drinking husbands. Nobody knows but themselves; and as a rule, they don't tell the worst."

"Well, I am sorry for them, and I don't know but it is a good thing for them to get together and see what they can do."

The women of the town evidently thought so. At the time appointed a large company assembled; some, of course, moved by curiosity, yet the many serious faces testified to an earnest purpose.

Strange to say, Elva Harris was present with her grandmother, who offered the opening prayer; giving thanks that she had lived to see that day. No one had asked Elva to attend the meeting, but her grandmother had assumed that she would go, and she did not care to manifest any unwillingness.

Mrs. Leighton had discussed the matter in her presence, and Patty Ainsworth had expressed regret that she could not be with them to assist in their proposed work. Under these circumstances, she would not make herself so singular, as to disclaim all interest in the subject then uppermost in the minds of the best people. She acquiesced in what was said, because it was easier to do so than to dissent. But when the meeting was over, and she was again in her grandmother's sitting-room, she said a little impatiently:

"It seems to me the world has suddenly waked up; as though it was a new thing for people to drink some kind of intoxicating liquor; but they have always done it."

"That is true, child, but it is something new for women to come to the front in working against it. When I was of your age, it was thought that men should manage all such things. Besides, people did not realize what a curse liquor-drinking was. If a man was very poor, no one thought of blaming liquor for his poverty, unless he was a notorious drunkard. There were a good many families where tea was considered so much of a luxury, that it was only used on great occasions,

but where liquor of some kind was counted among the necessaries of life."

"What has made the difference between now and then?"

"Various causes have worked together to effect the change. Women have been coming more to the front all along the line. They saw the need of more earnest work and more enthusiastic workers. We have never had a woman's temperance society in this town until now, but with one we should have had fewer poverty-stricken families. I am very thankful I have lived to see such a society organized, and I shall do all I can toward making its influence felt."

"Do you know, grandmother, that I came away from home, partly because I did not wish to take any active part for or against temperance. I could not make up my mind to join a temperance society, and I certainly could not oppose it; so as I wished to make you a visit, I thought it was a good time to come. I didn't intend to tell you about it, but I felt obliged to

confess, the same as when I was a little girl and had done something I knew you would disapprove."

"What if I should tell you I had guessed something of the kind?" responded Mrs. Harris pleasantly to Elva's frank confession.

"Why, grandmother, how could you?" exclaimed the astonished girl.

"I guessed it from the way you have spoken of what Sabra was attempting to do, and of what Belinda said. Then I learned to read your face, when it was an open book, and even now I can sometimes catch a glimpse between the covers. Ah! child, when you have lived to see what I have seen, you will feel differently.

"Rum-drinking has been the curse of this town, as it has of almost every town and city in our country. Perhaps I should not call it all rum-drinking, for rum is oldfashioned; but with me it stands for everything which can intoxicate: wine, brandy, whiskey, gin, beer, and hard old cider. We have had some cider drunkards among us, as bad as any. What if you had a brother, like Morley Leighton?"

"It seems to me I would move heaven and earth to save him. I don't wonder Helen is enthusiastic over forming a society."

"Neither do I; but what if her mother had been as enthusiastic in the same cause, when a young lady?"

"She would not have made currant wine, would she, grandmother?"

"No, indeed; neither would she have married a man accustomed to take a social glass with his friends. She would have foreseen the possible danger and avoided it. There was some excuse for ignorance, years ago; but now that every phase of the question has been studied and discussed by able men and women, ignorance is culpable. We know better than to make cider a common drink, and pour it out free as water for men, women, and children to drink. Not a drop goes into my cellar except for vinegar.

"But, Elva, I am not going to talk

temperance to you, until you are so tired of it you will be glad to leave me, that you may avoid it. It is not the only subject demanding attention."

"I am glad to hear you say that, grandmother, for I certainly wish to be told of something else."

"You certainly shall be," answered Mrs. Harris, with a smile at the somewhat weary face.

Yet, notwithstanding this promise, as certainly as the days came around, came some bit of news connected with what was called "the woman's movement." The superintendents of the different Sunday-schools in town had been interviewed, and asked to make temperance a prominent subject in their Sunday teachings.

The day-schools had been visited, and the teachers enlisted in the good work. The clergymen had been invited to preach temperance sermons.

An especial effort was made to obtain the name of every young lady in town on the society's book. In some cases it was hard to do this, because of relations with young men who were not teetotalers, and who looked with disfavor upon such extreme measures.

"As though I was in danger of becoming a drunkard, because I refuse to be tied down by promises and pledges, like a weak boy!" said one, engaged to be married to a light-hearted, merry girl, whose every wish had been gratified by parents who delighted in her happiness.

"But you don't call it weak to make promises and pledges about other things; and if you never taste of any kind of intoxicating liquor, you can not possibly be a drunkard," urged his fiancée. "I knew I should never be a drunkard, but I signed all the pledges of the society, and I shall keep them, too. I am keeping one, by trying to induce you to pledge yourself to total abstinence."

"I shall not do it, and if you had consulted me before attending that temperance meeting, you would not have gone," responded the young man a little sharply.

"I did not think it necessary to consult you; but if I had, I should have gone all the same," said the girl, with a decision she rarely manifested. "All my young lady friends have joined the society, and I intend to do my part of temperance work. Mother says it is time for me to think seriously about my own responsibilities, and after what I heard at the temperance meeting, I think so too. Another thing, Jack, I am almost afraid to marry you, unless you sign the pledge. I could not live with a man who even drank wine ever so moderately. I should rather break an engagement, as Patty Ainsworth did."

The young gentleman to whom this was said felt himself quite insulted; yet, concealing his anger, he laughed at the fears and scruples which he prophesied would

soon vanish.

CHAPTER XI.

SELLING PEANUTS.

The habitués of the club-room would have scorned to be classed with the patrons of liquor-saloons. Their room was handsomely furnished with the usual appliances for killing time. There were pictures on the walls; chairs which invited to idleness, and papers which could be read with more or less of interest while smoking.

Beyond this outer room was another, smaller and plainer, opening from which was a closet, containing various bottles and glasses; each labelled as belonging to one who claimed it as his own personal property.

The saloons laid no claim to elegance. Early in the day there was less of revolting uncleanliness than in the evening, when the air fairly reeked with the fumes of vile tobacco and viler liquors. There was a jingling of small coins and unwashed glasses, as drinks were dispensed to unquestioning customers. Men, roughly dressed, often with clothing worn to the last degree of decency, spent their money to beggar themselves and their families, while the saloon-keeper gloated over his ill-gotten gains.

Intoxicating liquor had always been sold in town, yet a great majority of the people, even of those employed in mills and shops, were teetotalers. Many, less strict in their habits, drank so moderately that little harm seemed to be done.

But there had come a change. New openings for employment had increased the number of workers; and quick to seize the opportunity, unscrupulous men had opened saloons which they claimed to be for the good of the community, although their disastrous effects were soon seen.

Another class, too, appeared; young men whom circumstances exempted from

manual labor, and who, for this reason, considered themselves entitled to privileges denied the less fortunate. To them the town was "slow and old-fashioned," and they proposed to introduce new customs; patronizing whom they pleased, and so establishing a kind of aristocracy of which they would be the centre.

"We have a double work to do," said Mrs. Eastwood when talking with Mrs. Harris. "We must make the club-room unpopular, and at the same time draw customers from the saloons. For one work we must depend largely upon the young ladies; for the other we must use all means and methods we can command. I suppose we can not hope for co-operation from the sisters of the young men composing the club."

"I fear not. So far as I know, they are in league with their brothers, to break down what they call our fogy notions. They ridicule any one who differs from them, and probably expect to accomplish in that way what they can not do in any other."

"They do not ridicule Sabra."

"Not in her presence. She has seemed to be quite a favorite, but of late she has declined some invitations which may have given offence. She would not disappoint Teddy Fritter, who counts on her to help him in his society meetings."

"That boy does nothing by halves. If we grown people were as much in earnest as he is, we should soon carry the

town for total abstinence."

"That is true, and he calculates that with a dozen boys, thoroughly enlisted, there will be some efficient opposition made to the saloons. Sabra says she would not for the world discourage him, although she fears he is too sanguine. He is working hard for the dozen boys."

How hard he was working for this, no other knew so well as did Micky McGill, who was his sworn confidant and ally.

"We must have a real, live temperance paper, with tip-top stories in it," he said to his friend, as they were discussing ways and means for increasing the interest. "We'll do it," answered Micky.

"But papers cost money, and we don't want to beg them. What say, Micky, to earning them, selling peanuts and lemonade with ice in it?"

"Where will we go to sell them? They won't have us anywhere near the saloons, and there is where the most men and big boys are."

"There is Mr. Hover's bobbin-shop, only three doors from Reegan's, and Mr. Hover pretends to be a temperance man. There is a broad step front of his shop, if he would let us be there."

"Get Miss Harris to ask him, and he won't tell her no."

"So I will," answered Teddy; and the next leisure moment he could command, he preferred his request.

This was granted; when Mr. Hover not only gave the use of his broad step, but volunteered to see that the boys were not molested. Of course, they received some further assistance in perfecting their plans, and then appeared one Saturday evening, crying their wares, and so arresting the steps of those who were passing.

Their first customer was a little girl, who was walking with her father, and who, after buying some peanuts, asked if she might have a glass of lemonade; saying softly:

"I almost know it is better than beer."

Two glasses were then called for, and their price paid, with some words of praise for the cool beverage.

"It ought to be good, for it is made first-rate, with lots of sugar and ice in it," responded Teddy. "We aren't going to cheat a bit, 'though we want to get all the money we can honestly."

"That is right," replied the gentleman.

"Be here next Saturday evening, and I will patronize you again. You may count on us for regular customers."

Just then two boys came up, who had evidently intended going further, but who stopped, and finally invested in lemonade.

"No use keeping on, now we've spent our money," said one to the other. "We may as well sit down and see the fun. There's room for us all, isn't there?"

"Yes, if you sit up in the corner, out of the way," answered Teddy.

"All right. The corner is just as good as anywhere, and better than some other places."

Later, some fellows who had already visited the saloon, and taken liquor enough to make them noisy and reckless, attempted to drive the young merchants from their position. Delivering their orders with great show of authority, they were about to snatch basket and pail, when Mr. Hover appeared upon the scene, and sent these intruders about their business.

As Dr. Harris was driving through the street, he stopped to drink a glass of lemonade, for which he paid so liberally, that Teddy thought there must be some mistake, and called after him to rectify it.

There was no mistake, however, and when the boys counted their gains, they were so delighted that their eyes filled with tears.

"I ain't crying, for I don't feel a bit sorry, but there's something the matter with my winkers," said Micky.

"So there is with mine, and I guess we better wipe up and go home," replied his companion; and it was not long before Teddy was telling his brother of his even-

ing's experience.

"We got laughed at, and some little fellows tried to steal our peanuts. Then some big ones tried to drive us off. But we came out all right, and we are going again next Saturday night. We might have sold lots more of lemonade. Everybody praised it, and one man said it was a great deal better than beer. He didn't buy any beer afterwards, either, for I watched him, and he went straight home.

"Another thing, John; I am going to Sunday-school to-morrow. I haven't told anybody except Micky, but I have got a clean white shirt and whole trowsers, and I am going."

"I hope you will. It must be a good place to go," was replied.

"Guess it is, Johnny. I have known that for ever so long. I thought I wouldn't go till I had a new suit clear through, but after what Miss Harris and Miss Belinda have done to help me, I am ashamed not to."

"How much money did you get?"

"I don't know exactly, but it is all in the box, and when I get done work, Monday, Micky and I are going to count it together, because, you know, half of it belongs to him. Then we will pay Miss Harris the money she lent us, and keep the rest for profits."

The next day it was necessary for the superintendent to form a new class in Sunday-school for the four boys who came in, as clean as clean could be, although poorly clothed. Micky McGill and his brother, with another member of the temperance society, had called early upon Teddy Fritter, asking permission to accompany him; and so it was that there were four new scholars instead of one.

"Something has won father over," said

Micky. "Mother was sorry she didn't know it in season, to make us more decent, but it was best for us to go before father had time to change. Little Pat wants to go, and Janie is fretting herself sick at staying away, but Uncle Reegan is just set against it."

These boys expected much, and their anticipations were more than realized. They were delighted with everything they saw and heard; especially, as at the suggestion of the superintendent, Sabra Harris left her class and devoted herself to them. The session closed with a short temperance talk and the singing of a familiar hymn, which last so delighted the new-comers that they were sure to be in their places the next Sabbath.

A great many things were happening right along, as Teddy said to Miss Belinda, when Henry Bedlow moved into the unoccupied rooms of the old house, bringing with him his sisters and the few articles of furniture they could claim as their own.

Never were children happier to feel that

they had a home. Instead of blaming their brother for not sooner providing one, they could hardly find words to express their gratitude for his kindness.

Miss Belinda was ready to adopt them at once, cheering them with her sympathy, and assisting them in their housekeeping. Martin Luther established himself as a sort of body-guard, dividing his attentions between his former mistress and the children, who thought him the grandest pet in the world.

John Fritter was a wonder to them. They could not understand why he should stay in the house and work like a woman; yet they soon made friends with him, and really seemed to arouse him somewhat from his usual apathy.

When Sabra Harris made her weekly visit to the old house, she spent most of her time in the large back room, where she found Lucy and Elsie Bedlow, who told her much of their past life.

They had not been in Sunday-school since their mother died, but they were

going as soon as their brother could provide them with suitable clothing. He chose to do this, without assistance from others, and as he was earning tolerable wages, he hoped soon to accomplish it.

"You have already done so much for me, I can not lay myself under further obligations," he said to Miss Belinda, through whom the offer of assistance was made. "It is better for me to do it all myself. I can do it, too. A young man, with good health and good habits, can accomplish anything."

plish anything."

"That is true," replied his friend.
"When I was of your age, I used to think that if I was only a man, I could gain for myself everything I wanted in the world; but there is a better chance for poor people now than there was then. There are better schools, more churches, more good reading, and more trying to help them up. There are always friends for those who need and deserve them. I have always found friends; and now I can walk without crutches, I sometimes feel as though my best days were to come."

CHAPTER XII.

OLD JERRY SIMPKINS.

ELVA HARRIS was sitting by an open window, when she saw a blear-eyed man going to the kitchen-door, with a battered tin pail in his hand; and presently she heard her grandmother say:

"Good-morning, Mr. Simpkins. Come in and sit down."

"Thank you kindly; but I guess I won't stop," was replied. "I have come to see if I can buy two quarts of milk. I want some to drink, clear, and some to put in my coffee. It is a good while since I bought any, but I thought I would try some for a day or two instead of whiskey. There, Mrs. Harris, now you have got the whole story."

"It is a good story; too good for you to keep all to yourself, but I hope you will

have a better one to tell me to-morrow morning."

"What would that have to be?" asked

the man.

"That you had decided never to drink another drop of intoxicating liquor so long as you live."

"I wish I could. I wish I had made up my mind to that forty years ago. Then I should be somebody better than old Jerry Simpkins, the drunkard of the town."

"You can be something better than that now," said Mrs. Harris. "It is not too late

for you to reform."

"I don't know as it is, 'though I have thought it was for a good many years. But Patty Ainsworth came to see me yesterday, and talked to me till it almost seemed as though I could do anything I wanted to. I hadn't a drop of liquor in the house; and after what she said to me, I was ashamed to go for any; so I lived through last night without my dram."

"If you can live through one night without a dram, you can live through one hundred." "I don't know about that, and—no offence to you, ma'am—you don't know anything about it. You don't know what it is to have your throat and stomach all on fire, and only one thing in the world that will stop the burning. Now, I put it to you fairly: Isn't it hard not to take that one thing when you are thirsty and craving for it?"

"Yes, Mr. Simpkins, it must be. But there is no need of getting into a condition where you have such a thirst."

"I know it, but you see I have got into it, and it is the worst thing in the world for a man to get rid of. It sticks to him tighter than anything else."

"I am willing to believe that, Mr. Simpkins, but the grace of God can help you to overcome it."

"I wish I had that grace. When I was lying awake last night, I thought all over what my mother used to say to me when I was a boy, and after I grew older. I wish I had done as she told me. Why, I felt so bad to think how she had worried over me, that I got up and tramped around the

field for two or three hours. I climbed the pinnacle six times, until at last I was so tired I had to go back to the house. But I am saying too much. I don't want to trouble you. If you will let me have the milk, I will go. Only there is one thing, Mrs. Harris; if you hear of my being drunk again before to-morrow night, I want you to know that I shall fight as long as I can before I give up; so you won't think of me worse than I am."

"You shall have my sympathy and my prayers; and you have not troubled me. I was thinking of you, this morning, and made up my mind to call at your house this very day. You are welcome to all the milk you will use, and if you will take a chair by the west window, we will have a friendly talk together."

Jerry Simpkins looked at the woman who thus addressed him, with an expression of surprise and wonder on his bloated face. That Mrs. Harris, who was held in such general esteem, should desire a friendly talk with him was past his under-

standing. He keenly felt his unworthiness, yet he so longed for sympathy, that he could not bring himself to quite refuse the kind invitation.

"I ain't fit to come in, but I will take a chair here, outside, on the platform," he answered. "I am a little shaky this morning. I miss my bitters, and I didn't have much in my cupboard either. I had a chance to earn seventy-five cents to-day, but it was where I didn't dare to go for fear of the cider."

"Then let me give you some breakfast, and after that we will have our talk."

"Thank you, kindly; but I better not stop to eat."

Mrs. Harris insisted, however, upon giving him some breakfast, and soon a substantial repast was spread upon a plain pine table, standing just outside the door. The strong coffee proved even more welcome than the food; since it somewhat assuaged the thirst which half maddened the unfortunate man. After eating and drinking, he expressed his gratitude warmly, saying in conclusion:

"I ought to go on the strength of this all day."

"I should be glad to give you as much every day, if you would only give up the use of liquor," was responded. "Think how much good your example would do, besides what you would gain for yourself."

"I know all about it, Mrs. Harris. I have thought it all over a hundred times. Don't suppose I have lived all these years without wishing I was different. Why, I never read of a man who has made something of himself, without thinking I might have done as well, if I had only made up my mind to it. Old Jerry Simpkins is as hateful to me as he can be to anybody else.

"When Patty Ainsworth came to see me, yesterday, I wouldn't let her come into my house, because it isn't a fit place for her. But we had a long talk together under the old elm, and I was glad of a chance to tell her that I ain't as much to blame about Morley Leighton as folks think I am. The first time he was in my

house, I picked him up beside the road, and carried him there and took care of him till he got so he could go home.

"I told Patty Ainsworth that and a good deal more, and she said she believed me. Morley Leighton learned to drink liquor at home. His father always took wine till lately, but he can't be moderate about anything. He goes the whole figure at once. If I could see him now, I should talk to him different from what I ever did before, and beg him to stop before he goes any further. But the right time to stop is before a boy or man takes the first glass. That is what your woman's society ought to work for, and if all the women were agreed on it, they could kill out the liquor quicker than it can be done in any other way."

"Then you believe the women are right in organizing a temperance society?"

"I wonder they didn't do it before. If the women in the town where I was brought up had struck for temperance, I should have gone with them. But then everybody, men and women, took punch, egg-nog, and such light stuff; and when the men were by themselves, they took something stronger, and more of it."

"I know how it was, Mr. Simpkins, and there are not many of us but have some responsibility in this matter. We must try to do better in the future, and so make what amends we can for the past. That is all any of us can do, except to help each other."

"I wish I could help somebody," said the poor man. "It seems to me if Morley Leighton was here, I could make him stop and think what he will come to if he keeps on drinking. But perhaps I couldn't. I am such a miserable wretch, I have thought for more than ten years that all there was for me was to keep right on in the old way, till Patty Ainsworth came to see me. One thing, 'though, I have always been glad I hadn't a wife or children to be dragged down with me."

"You might have been a different man, with a family dependent upon you."

"The chances would have been against it. When a man is set to drink liquor, he don't care half as much for his family as he does for the liquor. If I was a woman, there couldn't anything tempt me to marry a man who wasn't what you call a teetotaler."

There was a prolonged conversation between these two, one of whom was painfully conscious of his unworthiness and degradation, while the other strove to uplift him with words of sympathy and kindness. At length the visitor said decidedly that he must go, and after thanking Mrs. Harris for her kindness, promised to come the next morning prepared for work.

"I couldn't help hearing what Jerry Simpkins said, and I was surprised to hear him talk so well," remarked Elva Harris to her grandmother, soon after he had taken his leave. "I supposed he was too coarse and ignorant to express himself with anything like propriety, but he talked as well as most people."

"To be sure he did. I never talked with him so much before, but I have heard that he has a respectable education; although the people here know very little about him, except that he has been a besotted drunkard for the last ten years. He bought the house he lives in when he first came to town, about twelve years ago. He was then a good mechanic, ingenious in many ways, and earning large wages."

"Do you suppose he will really reform?"

"I don't know what to suppose; but if Patty Ainsworth has begun with him, she will not easily give him up. I think I shall walk down that way this afternoon, and see what he is doing."

"Isn't it dreadful that a man should ever get to be what he is?"

"Yes, it is, and it is dreadful, too, that women, old and young, like you and me, should not do all in our power to prevent such things. The worst drunkards in the country are men who began with drinking wine in elegant dining-rooms, parlors, and club-rooms."

"Why, grandmother, do you really think so?"

"I am sure of it; because those who have the best opportunity for knowing, and in whom I have confidence, say so. There is Morley Leighton."

"But I never heard of any one else, like him, being so bad."

"I am afraid you and I have never investigated the subject very thoroughly."

"It is not a pleasant subject, is it, grandmother?"

"I can not say that it is. But we are not living merely for pleasure. You can do a great work for temperance, if you will, Elva, and you will be held to account for all you might do. Temperance is not above religion; but there can be no religion without temperance; and in these days, temperance which is not teetotalism is of small account."

"Grandmother, last New Year's, Sabra and I began to work mottoes for the year, and now we have them framed and hanging in our room. Sabra's is 'Duty'; mine

is 'Pleasure'; and so far, Sabra has lived in exact accordance with her motto."

"And you?"

"I have done nothing worthy of being repeated."

"Which has been the happier?"

"Sabra is the happiest girl I know of, although everybody seems to come to her with their troubles, and she is always planning how she can help some one. She is very decided in her ideas of what is right, so that she disagrees with a good many; but for all that, people like her, even if they do think entirely different from her."

"I am glad to hear so good a report of her, and I expect, as you grow older, you

will follow in her footsteps."

"I don't know about that, grandmother, but I wish I knew whether there is a general awakening to a sense of duty, or if the awakening is especially with me."

CHAPTER XIII.

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A SPLENDID GIRL.

Ground was broken for a house on Fort Hill, the finest building site in town. Fayette Lyman, who, by his father's death, had lately come into possession of this land, together with a large fortune, so invested as to yield a generous income, decided to build here his summer residence.

Still a young man, with an accomplished wife, some years his junior, it was natural that there should be much curiosity in regard to his habits and principles.

"He has had the reputation of being pretty fast; but now he is married, he may settle down and make a worthy citizen," said one gentleman to another. "At any rate, he will bring a good deal of money with him, and that will be an advantage to

the town. Business promises to be lively here for a year or two. Real estate is coming up, and farmers will find a market for what they raise without carrying it to the city."

"I hope Lyman will help along on the right side of things. We have enough help on the wrong side. I suppose nobody knows how much he is really worth."

"I think not. His father made a will, although he was the only heir; and it was made in such a way as to prevent taking an inventory of his property."

"How did Lyman, senior, make his money?"

"By liquor. He kept his hand well covered, but he managed to rake in his pile whenever dividends were declared."

"Come by liquor, go by liquor. I have noticed that such money seldom stays in the family. You know some people believe that a curse rests upon it."

"I hope it won't be so in this case. It would be a pity to have such a man waste

his riches in liquor. Such men often drink moderately, and, as they would say, elegantly, without becoming drunkards."

"Their families know more about that than you or I do. There is a chance for a rich man to keep out of sight when he has been drinking too much, while a poor man is likely to be known for as bad as he is. It the whole truth was told, I think it would be found that there is as much hard drinking among the rich as among the poor; especially among women."

"You must be mistaken about that. Why, in some of our large cities, there are localities which fairly swarm with drunkards of the lowest type."

"That is true, but our halls of State and National legislation have often been disgraced with as low a type of drunkenness; although the liquor drank was more costly, while the surroundings have made it in some ways less repulsive. Drunk is drunk; nothing more and nothing less. There was never so much liquor drank in this town, in the same length of time, as there has

been in the last six months; and so far as I know, hardly a man has stirred to oppose it. The fight against it has begun with women who mean business, and I am expecting grand results."

"I hope they will do good, 'though it is a new departure for our women. But if I have been rightly informed, they were not first on the ground. Some boys organized a society before the women had their first meeting. They are poor, but they are in dead earnest, and they have Sabra Harris for adviser and helper; so they can count on the doctor, of course. Sabra is the very apple of his eye."

"She always has been ever since she was born, and no wonder. She is smart and independent, besides meaning to do her duty as fast as she knows it. Her sister is the handsomest, but folks say Sabra more than makes up for that by her pleasant manners. She is the same to everybody, too, which marks her for the lady she really is. She is near the front in the woman's temperance society."

"I hope that society will do some good."

"It will. There is no doubt about that. I suppose the women of your family are all enlisted?"

"Well—no, not yet. I thought they better wait and see what was best to do. Perhaps I have some old-fashioned notions, but I can't quite bring myself to approve of all new ways. I must be going, however. Remember, I believe in temperance as strongly as anybody. Good-morning."

It was evident that Mr. Leland, who left his friend so abruptly, was not in favor of the woman's temperance society. He had two sons, growing up to manhood, who needed every restraining influence which could be brought to bear upon them; yet he allowed them to see that he thought it possible to be too radical on the temperance question. Moreover, he actually forbade his daughters to have any part in the proposed measures against saloons. He did not allow them even a fair hearing in the matter.

" If father knew what we know, he would

feel differently," remarked the elder. "I am afraid the boys will go to destruction before his eyes, and he never suspect it until too late."

Mr. Leland was not the only father who seemed unconscious of the danger threatening his family. There were many; some who trusted to time and circumstance to correct the faults of youth; while others, lax in their own principles and habits, saw no harm in an occasional lapse from rigid rules.

The club-room still offered its attractions to a select few; yet so strong was the feeling against it in certain quarters, that some who had visited it once could not be induced to enter it again. Only once did the prayer-meeting miss the two singers upon whom so much depended; and it was no secret that Sabra Harris had appealed to them in such a way, they had no wish to repeat the offence.

"When Elva comes home, we shall see what she will do," said Susan West to her brother, who felt himself personally injured by such interference. "Her influence will partly counteract Sabra's."

"Not a bit of it," replied Angus West.
"Sabra can pull a dozen strings where
Elva can pull one. I don't know but she
has a string in her hand which would pull
me, if she thought it worth her while to try.
She is a splendid girl."

"Of course she is, but for all that she is a real fanatic. She condemns tobacco, as well as every kind of stimulant. I don't suppose she would drink a glass of wine if she knew it would save her life; though, for my part, I can not get through a day without something to tone me up and give me strength."

"Better be careful about that, Sue. If there is anything in the world to be despised, it is a tippling woman."

"Why is she more to be despised than a tippling man? I don't believe you often go through a day without something stronger than tea or coffee."

"Whatever I may do is no criterion for you. You need to be on your guard. I

have thought so before. I really believe you would be better off without toning up. Try it and see."

"Play teetotaler, do you mean?"

"Yes, I mean just that."

"I will agree to it when you will. Let me know when you sign the magic pledge, and my name shall appear next to yours."

"Pshaw, Sue, I don't need to sign any

pledge."

"No more do I, so let us hear no more of it."

The brother went out, returning in about an hour, to say that Elva Harris was at home, having arrived the previous evening.

"Come with me to call on her," responded Susan West, who added, a moment later, with something like triumph in her voice: "It will never do for you to go with such a breath. Sabra Harris would know in a minute that you have been drinking wine. It is inconvenient to have such scrupulous friends, but I don't quite like to give them up."

Susan West went alone to the house of Dr. Harris, where she found Elva, whom she complimented upon improved appearance; asking in the same breath:

"Why did you stay so long in the country, when you knew we were all pining to see you? I am afraid you enjoyed it too well."

"I did enjoy my visit, but I stayed a week longer than I intended, for the sake of going to a temperance picnic."

"A temperance picnic!" repeated Susan

"Yes; a temperance picnic. I don't wonder you are surprised; but while I was away I joined a woman's temperance society, and this evening I expect to join another. So I give you fair warning, that I shall preach temperance in season and out of season. I expect to eclipse Sabra, as a reformer."

"For mercy sake, don't preach to me. Our friendship would never stand the strain. How can you make yourself so singular?"

"I should have been singular had I refused to join the temperance society while at grandmother's. You know who the Leightons are?"

"Yes; I met Miss Helen Leighton and her brother at the beach last summer."

"Well, he is a perfect sot; so bad, that his father has taken him to a private asylum, where it will be impossible for him to obtain a drop of liquor of any kind. I never was so shocked in my life, as when I heard he was such a drunkard."

"But how could his father shut him up? He must be of age, and he certainly is not insane."

"He has an insane appetite for liquor. I don't know by what authority his father can confine him, but of course Mr. Leighton understands the law."

"Of course he does. But I thought Morley Leighton was engaged to a Miss Ainsworth. I saw them together, and they seemed devoted to each other. Some one said they had been engaged since they were children."

"I presume they had, but the engagement is broken. Patty Ainsworth became a Christian; and after that, she began to think what her life might be with such a man as Morley Leighton, until she decided that she could not trust him."

"So she broke her engagement for a mere whim. I thought Christians professed to keep their promises."

"They do; but Patty Ainsworth could not marry a drunkard."

"Morley Leighton could never be a common drunkard, with his manners and his education. Besides, she could have influenced him after they were married. Suppose every woman made up her mind not to marry a man who was not a teetotaler. What then?"

"What then? There would be fewer wretched, poverty-stricken families, and the world would be the gainer by so much."

"Is there a clause in the constitution of your society forbidding a member to marry. a man who does not give his conscience into her keeping?" asked Susan West with a sneer; adding, before she could be answered: "If so, I wish you joy of a set of milksops. No man of any spirit would submit to such conditions."

"You don't understand it as I do, and we had better say no more about it," replied Elva; her face flushing at the insolent tone of her companion.

"Sabra, I have made a clean breast of it; told the very worst there was to tell, and lived through the outburst of Susan West's scorn," said the younger sister half an hour later. "She left me without a single sweet effusion, and I can solace myself with the thought that I shall be counted unworthy of any further attention from her. I hoped you would come in while she was here."

While saying this, Elva was turning to the wall the motto upon which she had spent so much time, and when it could be no longer seen, she exclaimed:

· "There! If I can not have a better motto, I will have none."

"I will share mine with you," responded Sabra; her face lighting up with a rare, sweet smile.

"I don't know as I am quite ready for that. But I have learned that when one begins to think seriously about some *one* thing, all other things take on a more serious look. I really believe that a great many people never stop to think that life is more than a holiday. If they did, they could not go on as they do."

"I went to grandmother's to get away from so much talk about temperance, and your 'duty,' but there was as much serious talk there as here. I have come back, determined to study it all out for myself, and then decide what to do. I believe now in working for temperance."

"Sometime you will believe in working for religion. Then we can work together, heart and hand, and I have no doubt your part of the work will be the better done. You have not learned yet of what you are capable."

CHAPTER XIV.

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A HARD PLACE.

TEDDY FRITTER had so far accomplished his purpose, that twelve boys were pledged to total abstinence; every one of whom was provided with a temperance paper, to be carefully read and then passed on to others. It was surprising how rapidly these papers were distributed in families where they were almost the only influence for good.

Little Pat Reegan, who was just learning to form words into sentences, studied them with his cousin, Micky McGill, and then went home to tell Janie all he could remember of the stories and pictures; wishing always that he was a man, so that he could make folks stop drinking the bad stuff.

"I am going to, now I tell you," he

would say, clenching his hands and stamping his feet. "Father is awful wicked, and I should think he would be afraid to stay in the dark a single minute."

But the father seemed neither to care nor fear what might happen, if he could only add a dollar to his gains. These gains were less than he had anticipated; which fact made him morose and sullen; even Janie sometimes suffering from his ill-temper. Perhaps nothing else angered him so much as the small temperance saloon, which every Saturday evening was in good running order, on Mr. Hover's broad step.

Lemonade and peanuts had met a ready sale, while the venders had become well known as honest, reliable boys, who would make a good use of every penny they could honestly earn. Many would walk quite a long distance for the sake of patronizing them, and when they added to their wares a supply of small cakes, made by Mrs. Fritter according to one of Miss Belinda's rules, their sales were largely increased.

"We can't sell lemonade in cold

weather," said Micky, as he and his partner huddled themselves together in the corner to avoid a pelting rain.

"Got any hot coffee?" shouted a man hurrying by; and being answered in the negative, responded:

"You are behind the times. A man needs something to warm him up, in such a storm as this."

"That is it," exclaimed Teddy. "We must have coffee. I have read about keeping it hot over a little stove or a lamp, and we can find out exactly how to do it. We will ask Mr. Hover if he is willing."

Mr. Hover was not only willing, but he made the necessary arrangements himself, and purchased the first cup of coffee they offered for sale. Dr. Harris, too, patronized them; his example being followed by others who wished to encourage so laudable an enterprise. Nothing occurred to mar the prosperity of the young merchants, until Micky was taken suddenly ill, and Teddy was left alone on the broad step.

There Elva Harris saw him, as she was driving past with her father, who had just come from visiting Micky. They stopped for a moment, and, observing that customers were impatient at being obliged to wait, Elva sprang from the carriage and offered her assistance while her father waited. Everybody then wished to buy; so that Teddy's stock was soon exhausted, and he was ready to go home.

"I did not stop to think how it would look," she said, when telling her sister what she had done. "Father made no objection, and I could see that the poor boy was at his wit's end to know what to do. I sold a cup of coffee and four cakes to a man who ate and drank as though he was half starved, and who told me he would have spent his money for liquor, if he had not seen Teddy's lantern."

"It was almost the last thing I should have expected you to do; but if father approved, it was all right," replied Sabra.

"I think it was all right. When I made up my mind to help everybody I could, I

did not limit myself to any particular ways and means. So if I am to sell cakes and coffee, I shall not shirk the duty. I keep thinking about that poor man. I wish I knew something more about him. When I came away, he was curled up in the corner opposite Teddy's stand, and looked as though he intended to spend the night there. I didn't think so much about it then, but I will ask father to look after him in the morning."

"What of Micky McGill?"

"Poor Micky; I had almost forgotten him. He is very sick, and father says his mother knows nothing about nursing. He says, too, that all the regular nurses are busy, so I don't know what will be done."

Dr. Harris left home early the next morning, before his daughter saw him, so he knew nothing of the man in the corner. Micky McGill was decidedly worse than on the previous evening. Sick of a contagious and much-dreaded disease, nothing but the best of nursing would save him. In this emergency Mrs. McGill was

helpless, while her husband was worse than helpless; although, as he said, with true Irish earnestness, he was ready to pay pound for pound for the boy who was the light of his eyes.

Dr. Harris considered, and then went to Miss Belinda for help.

"I knew you would be safe from contagion, and I could think of no one else," he said, after stating the case.

"I shall be glad to go," she answered.

"I am able to do more active work, and I have had a good deal of experience with that disease. Micky, too, is one of my favorites. But, doctor, there is some one in the barn for you to visit. Teddy took a man home with him last night. He thought a bed on the hay was better than no bed at all. I am sure the man has not gone, unless he went before daylight. You will know better what to say to him than any one here."

"I will look after him while you are getting ready to go with me," answered the doctor.

Miss Belinda had waited several minutes before Dr. Harris returned. When he opened the door of her room, he asked abruptly:

"Do you remember Luke Mooney, who lived with his uncle at the Pines, and who

attended our school one winter?"

"I do remember him."

"You have reason to remember him with no feelings of kindness, but he is too much an object of pity, now, to be regarded with any feelings of resentment. I have just seen him. It was he Teddy took home last evening. I will engage Mrs. Fritter to provide him with food, and Henry Bedlow and Teddy to watch him, so he will not leave the premises. He has spent a good fortune, and is now, as he says himself, an outcast and a vagabond."

"Luke Mooney come to that," murmured Miss Belinda. "May God pity and forgive him. He is no better than a drunkard's daughter. Of all my schoolmates, he was the one I dreaded most to meet; he taunted me so with my poverty, ridiculing my dress, and telling me I was not fit to be among decent people. I hated him."

"No wonder you did; but you could not hate him now. He is too far down for that. He says he paid Elva his last cent for cakes and coffee. He owned that he was going to a saloon for liquor, but seeing Teddy's lantern, and a woman in such a strange place, he stopped."

Luke Mooney was indeed a pitiable object. He had suffered so much, and been treated so roughly, that the kindness of Dr. Harris quite won his confidence; but the moment he was left alone, all his old recklessness returned.

He refused to enter the house for breakfast, insisting that he was not hungry; yet when food was carried to him, he ate greedily. Then he was ready to move on; but so many objections were made to this, and he was so closely watched, that he saw no way of escape. Teddy had received such strict orders, it was not until late in the afternoon that he relaxed his vigilance; when he reported to Dr. Harris, and at the same time inquired for Micky.

It was sad news for Teddy, when told that his friend was dangerously sick; but he comforted himself, as he said confidently:

"If Micky dies, he will go to heaven.

I know he will, because he loves God and the Saviour. He knows his sins are all forgiven, and he won't be afraid to die."

The father thought only of himself, cry-

ing:

"What will I do! I can't live without my boy. Save him, doctor, and I'll go down on my knees to you. I'll be your servant to the end of my life. Save him, and I'll never taste the liquor again as long as I live."

Then he broke forth into a lament, hardly intelligible to those who heard it, appealing to Miss Belinda not to leave them, and promising her the most extravagant reward if she would stay.

She seemed to have no choice. Within twenty-four hours, another child was stricken down, and the lives of the two, so far as human means were of avail, were in her hands. Dr. Harris prescribed and advised, yet left much to her own discretion.

The parents did her bidding; ready, when the crisis was passed, and they knew their children would live, to fall at her feet and worship her. Another was then found to take her place, and she went to her home to rest.

Until then she had not thought to ask of Luke Mooney, but she now recalled what she had last known of him.

"I could not keep him," said the doctor in answer to her questions. "I gave him a warm suit of clothes, but it would not surprise me to know that he had bartered them for liquor. I could do nothing more for him. He realizes what he has lost and what he may suffer; but he assured me, again and again, that he had no power to resist his appetite. We can only pray for him."

"Has he a family?"

"When I asked him that question, he did not answer me. I am afraid he has."

"If he has, how terrible life must be for them. People are afraid of a great many things, but there is a terror in the fear a drunkard's family feels when they hear him coming. I hope and pray the Lord will let me do something toward preventing so much drunkenness. I am so thankful to be better; and, doctor, if you know of a hard place, where I can work to advantage, tell me, and I will do the best I can."

She had not long to wait, although it was not Dr. Harris who called her to work. She had been at home but two days, when Mrs. Reegan came to her in almost breathless haste, begging her to "come and see Janie."

"She has fretted that much about Sunday-school and her teacher, she was nigh sick before, but now she is like Micky," said the weeping mother. "It all comes of the saloon and the drink that's sold there. My husband was that kind and pleasant, when he was working fair and honest, and bringing me his wages regular every Saturday night; taking a drop maybe with a friend, but never enough to hurt him or me. Now it is money he wants, and the drink too. He is taking to that more every day, until I am night crazed. O lady, do fight the liquor. If my Janie dies, I'd be glad to die, too, only for little Pat and the others. The liquor is just like a murdering knife, cutting out the heart of him that drinks it and of them that belong to him."

Miss Belinda did not need to be urged to accompany the almost distracted woman. She had known for weeks that Janie Reegan was far from well, yet she was wholly unprepared for so great a change in the once happy, healthy child. She saw at once that no mortal power could avail to save the life fast going out.

"Her father wouldn't send for the doctor, so I went for you," said Mrs. Reegan, as she eagerly scanned the face of her companion. "Let me see your husband," responded Miss Belinda.

"He is in the saloon, and I wouldn't dare call him," answered the wife.

"I will see him myself. I have something to say to him."

The now really terrified mother attempted to dissuade Miss Belinda from thus braving her husband's anger, but the message to be delivered admitted of no delay. Mr. Reegan had just raised a glass of liquor to his lips, when a woman opened the door of his saloon, and said deliberately:

" Janie is dying."

"I don't believe it. You and her mother have trumped up that story, to scare me into sending for Dr. Harris; but I never will do it. I have had enough of him and them that belong to him. There is the door, and the sooner you go out of it, the better."

"Janie is dying."

Something in the tone in which these

words were uttered, for the second time, made it impossible for him to reply as before.

"I can't believe it. I am sure Janie will soon be better. I will go and see her," he said sullenly.

As Miss Belinda left, the saloon, he followed quickly, passing her on the stairs leading to his home. Stopping for a moment just outside the door of the room in which his little daughter lay, he heard her say in a husky voice:

"Don't cry, mother. I am so tired, I can't do any good staying here; and I think Jesus is going to take me to live with Him. If I could see teacher before I go, I should be so glad; but I shall see her in heaven. Father won't let me talk to him, but I know he loves me, and when I am gone, tell him I loved him all the same, if he did make me so sorry.

"Tell him not to keep the wicked place open any longer; and tell him, too, not to drink the wicked stuff any more.—I am so tired; but tell little Pat——"

CHAPTER XV.

rante is impossible for him to reply, as be-

A SALOON CLOSED.

Mr. Reegan did not stay to hear Janie's message to little Pat. Instantly the truth flashed upon him. His darling child was sick—perhaps unto death—and he had refused to believe it.

He plunged down the stairs into the street, and unmindful of those who sought to detain him, hurried to the house of Dr. Harris: where, panting for breath, and overwhelmed with grief, it was with difficulty he could make himself understood. Stopping only for an assurance that he would be quickly followed, he rushed home; and going at once to Janie's room, he kneeled by her bedside and reached out his arms to draw her closer to him.

There he asked her forgiveness for having grieved her, promising to do in future

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whatever she wished. She should go to Sunday-school, and have all the papers she wanted. Little Pat should have some new clothes and go with her.

"And will you shut up the bad place?" asked the child, thridding her thin fingers through her father's shaggy beard.

"Yes, if you want it shut," he replied.

"I am so glad, but it will be after I am gone, father. I am so tired, I want to rest. I can't stay here; but you'll be good to mother, won't you? She'll miss me, and so will little Pat and the rest."

"Hush, child, don't be talking of not staying. I've been hard with you. I'll never forgive myself; but you'll forgive me, won't you, Janie, and I'll make it all up to you."

While father and child were thus talking, Mrs. Reegan sat in an adjoining room, weaving to and fro, and stifling her sobs as best she could; while Miss Belinda listened for any call which might be made for her.

There were steps on the stairs, and Dr.

Harris came in with his daughter. Janie was overjoyed to see her teacher, but her strength was so nearly exhausted, she could speak only in broken sentences.

"Save my girl, and name your own price, and I'll live on bread and water to pay you," cried Mr. Reegan, giving place to the doctor.

"I can not save your child's life," said Dr. Harris soon after. "You must give her up. She is going beyond us, to the Heaven where you and I may meet her if we are found worthy."

"Then I have killed her," wailed the father. "I have killed her for the money and the drink, and it's cursed I am forever and ever."

"Hush," said Sabra Harris, bending close to the dying girl, to catch her faintly murmured words.

"Angels,—music. Don't you hear them singing? Beautiful, beautiful. Tell them not to be sorry. Little children. Jesus, take me."

The voice grew fainter, then ceased al-

together. Janie Reegan was dead. One moment her father protested that it could not be; the next he reproached himself for having killed her.

Miss Belinda at last persuaded him to go to his wife, who was stunned by the blow which had fallen upon her, but she turned away from him. It was not until little Pat and the younger children came in from a neighbor's room, that she seemed to realize there was work and duty still remaining.

Later, the door of the saloon was locked, the window shutters closed and securely fastened. Little Pat, who had kept close to his father while this was done, said as they were going up the stairs:

"You made a mistake. That was what Janie used to say, and she told me to tell you if you asked God to forgive you, He would, if you didn't do so any more."

It was a great concession on the part of Mr. Reegan, and one for which he was severely censured, that he allowed a Protestant clergyman to officiate at his little daughter's funeral.

"He was Janie's priest; and if I went against her when she was alive, I'll not do it now she is dead," was the reply he made to a friend who remonstrated with him.

Indeed, the arrangements for the funeral were made by Miss Belinda and Miss Harris at his request. The Sunday-school class of which she was a member followed her to the grave, strewing her coffin with flowers, and singing a tender farewell to the first of their number who had passed "over the river."

How or when the old saloon was cleared of its contents was known but to him who chose to keep it a profound secret. No one bought either fixtures or liquors; yet within a week, there appeared in the window a notice that the premises were to let.

"One saloon is closed, and now is our time to look out for the others," said Teddy Fritter, going into Miss Belinda's room, made brighter even than in summer, with flowering plants and autumn leaves. "We boys are going into every saloon in town, all together, and ask the men not to sell any more liquor. Don't you believe that will do some good, Martin?"

Martin purred his assent; rubbing against Teddy, and seeming anxious to express his approbation of the plan.

"I hope it will do a great deal of good," remarked Miss Belinda.

"I hope so, too," answered Teddy. "I told Miss Harris, and she said she would pray for us. Perhaps the saloon-keepers will be mad, but we are going to-morrow morning. Now it is vacation from school, all the boys can go as well as not. We have been waiting for Micky, because he isn't any more afraid to talk than I am. I shall want somebody to help me."

The twelve clean, well-dressed boys made a really fine appearance, as they marched through the streets, the next morning, calling at the different saloons.

"Who on earth sent you here?" was the first salutation they received.

"We sent ourselves," replied Teddy, repeating the request already made.

"You look like a company of young pil-

grims. Where are you going?"

"Going to a better land," said Micky, with due seriousness.

"Then how can you afford to stop on the way?"

"We stopped to take you along with us."

"What have the rest of you to say for yourselves?" now asked the saloon-keeper, looking sharply along the line.

"We are a temperance society, and-"

"Oh! I begin to understand, and you are a pretty good looking society, too. Here, John, treat this society to beer and cigars."

"We wouldn't touch them," cried several voices, and at a sign from Teddy, they marched out of the saloon in as good order as they had entered.

Thus they visited every saloon in town; in only one of which did they receive any encouragement.

"I have been thinking about it," said the middle-aged man standing behind the counter. "Selling liquor is a bad business, and if my boy had lived, I wouldn't have him see me here, for all the money I shall ever make. I never sell to boys anyway. I wouldn't be guilty of taking money from them."

"But, Mister, some of the men you sell to have boys and girls at home, who have to go hungry because you take their father's money," answered Teddy.

"I have thought of that, and I know it is wrong to take what they need. I am glad you are all going to start right. I would stop selling to-day if the rest would; but if I don't sell, somebody else will, so it wouldn't make any difference."

"It would make lots of difference with you," responded Micky. "You would be a better man, and God wouldn't be so angry with you. He knows how wicked you are, and how wicked the stuff you sell makes other men. I guess this is where my father used to come, but he won't come

here any more. He is square temperance, now, and so good, it don't seem as though he was the same father he used to be."

"What is your name?" asked the proprietor.

"Micky McGill, sir."

"Ah! yes; I remember McGill. I haven't seen him lately."

"No more will you in such a place as this. He has promised, and put his name to it; and we have a great deal better things at our house than we used to have."

"I am glad of it."

"You aren't half as glad as I am. Other folks could have good things, too, if there didn't anybody sell liquor and tobacco. That is what makes folks so poor and cross. Father don't scold as he used to. Please don't sell any more liquor."

Out again into the street. Two hotels remained to be visited, and although it required some courage to meet the landlords, they did so, and received more considerate treatment than they had dared to expect.

The task accomplished they had set

themselves to do, they drew long breaths of relief; feeling that whatever might be the result, they had been governed by a sense of duty. Teddy had already learned that reforms move slowly, so he was not disappointed when he knew that, despite their efforts, the saloons continued in full blast.

Their work, however, was supplemented by the young ladies of the woman's temperance society, who resolved themselves into committees of two, and called at every place where liquor was known to be sold. The social position and refined manners of these young ladies secured them the consideration they deserved, while their pleas and arguments were unanswerable. With them they carried a pledge, to which they solicited signers; asking every one they met in the saloons, proprietors as well as customers.

"I am ready to give up," said the man with whom the boys had talked longest. "I won't wait for another society to call on me. Give me the pledge and I'll sign

it on the spot." Having done this, he added: "Wait and see me tear down my name over the door and shut up shop."

To some loungers, smoking lazily by the

stove, he said:

"You can stay here long enough to sign the temperance pledge, and then you must be going."

"Guess we sha'n't do that in a hurry," replied one. "We ain't ready to sign away our liberty, because some pretty girls think they know better what we need than we know ourselves."

"Enough of that. There is all outdoors for you to stay in;" and the loungers moved out; looking back, however, to see the old saloon shut up.

At the next regular meeting the committees made their reports, which were considered encouraging, notwithstanding but one saloon had been closed. The subject of temperance was generally discussed. Many who had been wholly indifferent were beginning to regard it as worthy of consideration.

Temperance literature was circulated in such a way as to insure its being read. Facts and statistics were collected which startled even those accustomed to regard liquor-selling and liquor-drinking as the crying sins of the age.

"Let us have a meeting in the town hall, and tell people these things," said Elva Harris, who was universally acknowledged to be the most enthusiastic worker in the ranks. "Read the lists of figures to them, and then enforce the lesson to be learned. It is not possible that people will live on, as they do now, when they once comprehend what a monopoly the liquor interest is. I move that we have a public meeting, and conduct it ourselves, depending entirely upon home talent."

"But who will speak?" asked one.

"Every one of us, if necessary," was replied. "Our president is able to do her part well, and the other members must do as well as they can. Perhaps the motion would come with better grace from some one older, but I wish to have it considered."

It was considered, accepted, and necessary arrangements made. It required some discrimination to assign the parts where they would be well sustained, but this was finally done, and a notice given of the meeting, which it was decided should continue only for an hour.

The hall was crowded. The opening exercises were conducted in such a manner that no one could presume to criticise them. There was singing, led by Sabra Harris, who was never in better voice. The prayer offered by Mrs. Eastwood was short, comprehensive, and fervent.

The time was principally occupied by young ladies, who found it easier to read from the written page than to speak without notes; yet this detracted nothing from the force of what they had to say.

It was a solid array of facts from first to last; facts stated so clearly and distinctly, that every one in the large audience could hear and understand. People wondered at their ignorance of the monster evil which is gradually sapping the life of our nation.

When, at the close of the meeting, there was an opportunity for signing a pledge of total abstinence, and also for joining the woman's temperance society, a large number of names were obtained, which augured well for success in the future.

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CHAPTER XVI.

INHERITED.

Many of the men in the audience lingered until the secretary of the woman's temperance society had taken her book and papers from the table and prepared to leave the hall, when Mr. Ryeland said:

"Now it is our turn. If we have not heard enough, this evening, to arouse us to a sense of our duty, we must be dull indeed. I move that we organize a society, now and here, for the suppression of liquor-selling in our midst."

"I second the motion," rejoined Dr. Harris.

Moved and seconded, the motion was carried by acclamation, and Mr. Ryeland appointed chairman of the meeting. There was no need of speeches or discussions.

The organization was quickly effected, with the chairman as president, and younger men filling other offices. A clergyman invoked God's blessing upon the new society, and the meeting was closed. This, however, seemed a signal for general conversation, in which opinions were freely exchanged.

"It appears that, after all our boasted independence, we are at the mercy of brewers and distillers," remarked a gentleman, who had been disposed to regard any innovations as unwise and unnecessary. " I never should have taken the trouble to study up what we have heard this evening; but the young ladies had all the authorities at their tongues' end. If what they said is true—and I suppose it must be-no wonder our jails and prisons and poorhouses are full of criminals and paupers. No wonder our taxes are high, and our towns and cities filled with families half clothed and half fed. For my part, I am ashamed of having done nothing towards stopping this infamous business."

"It is infamous. There is no mistake about that," responded one of a group gathered around the speaker. "Many of the men engaged in it are ashamed to have it known."

"I wouldn't engage in a business I was ashamed of."

"But the profits. There is no other legitimate business which pays as large a profit for the money invested."

"Legitimate! Do you call the business

legitimate?"

"Certainly. It is protected by the laws of our country, and is the source of an immense revenue to our government."

"It is the source of an immense loss to the country, not to be computed in dollars and cents, but in human lives and human happiness."

"It is bad enough, as everybody knows, but we can't do much, except right here at home; and the boys and women have forestalled us in that."

A few ladies, who waited to see what would be done, felt repaid for all the ef-

forts they had made, in knowing that their example had moved husbands, fathers, and brothers to look around with more observant eyes.

"If there had been such an awakening in the town where I lived, when I was a young girl, it would have been worth everything to me," said Miss Belinda to Miss Harris. "I am thankful it is coming to others, but I can not help wishing it had come to me. I should like to see the old town once more, and attend one of the temperance meetings. I keep wondering about it."

"Grandmother Harris will tell you about it when she comes. She remembers you and will be glad to see you."

"I shall be glad to see her. I remember her as one of my kindest friends. I have carried home many a pail of milk from her pantry, when there was not much else for my supper; and she always gave it to me, as though I was doing her a favor to take it."

"That was Grandmother Harris' way," replied her namesake.

It was a way, too, which had not changed. When she met Belinda Mann, she talked far more of favors received than of favors bestowed.

"I remember you as always ready to lend me a helping hand," she said kindly. "I have often wished since for such help as you used to give me. I was very glad when I heard you were living here, able to provide comfortably for yourself. It is a great deal to do that, but Sabra tells me you do more. You are helping others."

"I try, but it is not much I can do."

"If you do what you can, that is all the Lord requires of you. He is sure to require that of every one of us. We have no right to hide even one talent in a napkin. I am expecting great results for temperance, now that women have come to the rescue."

In reply to some questions in regard to Morley Leighton, Mrs. Harris said:

"He is supposed to be in confinement, in some private asylum, although the family are careful not to speak of him.

Some people think that is not the way to reform him; but if he belonged to me, I should not know what to do."

Mr. Leighton knew no more than his neighbors, yet it had seemed imperative that he should do something. As a last resort, and by a stretch of authority, warranted only by the terrible necessity, he had done what then seemed to him best. But he was by no means satisfied, as he himself acknowledged.

Not long after his mother's arrival, Dr. Harris received a call from his old schoolmate and friend, who, when they were by themselves, said in a voice, every intonation of which expressed the deepest sorrow and anxiety:

"I have come to you for advice; and if the cure of inebriety is in your line, I have a patient for you. As I presume you know, my son, Morley, is a besotted drunkard. There is no softening the repulsive fact. Can you recommend any treatment likely to reform and save him? I have done all in my power to do; and here I am, helpless, and almost hopeless. Can you give me either help or hope?"

"I wish I could," replied Dr. Harris.

"Of course, you have appealed to your son, and used all possible arguments to induce him to change his course?"

"I have, and he has promised me again and again to give up his drinking habits; but I am beginning to doubt if he can do it. His appetite for liquor seems to be an overmastering passion. He has sacrificed everything for it."

"There must be a limit to the sacrifice he will make."

"I am afraid not, doctor. Do you believe in inherited tendencies?"

"Most certainly I do; and to my mind there is nothing else which gives so solemn a significance to life, as the thought that those who are to come after us, even to the third and fourth generation, may suffer for our sinful habits. It is enough to make a man shudder at the responsibilities he often takes upon himself without a single consideration for the future."

"Well, doctor, I have never spoken of it, but my wife's grandfather was a common drunkard at the time her father was born. His children had such a horror of the poverty and degradation of drunkenness, that no one of them followed his example; but Morley has many traits of character like him. In such a case, what can be done?"

"Your pardon, friend; but what could have been done, and what can now be done are two very different things. If I feared any such influence in my family, I should teach my children, from the very first, to what danger they were exposed, and insist upon a rigid self-control."

"That is what we did not do. I never thought total abstinence necessary to me, and neither did my wife; so we have conformed to the general usage and taken an occasional glass of wine, when with others who had no scruples against it. My wife, too, prided herself on her home-made wines, without thinking that she was doing her family an injury. We began wrong

with Morley. Now, is it possible for us to begin over again and begin right? Can the appetite for alcoholic drinks be destroyed by the use of drugs?"

"I should have no faith in drugs for such a purpose, although others may know more about it than I do. Of course, some stimulating, yet harmless drink, will in part satisfy the craving when it becomes too intolerable to be borne; but I have yet to learn that the appetite can ever be destroyed by antidotes. There are claims to such cures, but to me they do not seem well authenticated. In such cases, I should depend entirely upon a firm will, avoidance of temptation, and the help which comes from above in answer to prayer."

"Dr. Harris, will you take Morley under your care for six months, and see what you can do for him? That is the question I came here to ask you. I am ready to pay you one, two, three thousand dollars, or more, if you will take him and do by him as you would if he was your own son. If you could save him, I would willingly give

you the whole of my fortune, and then go to work and earn another. Will you take him?"

"I am sorry to deny you, my friend, but I dare not assume so much responsibility. If you have failed, my efforts would surely be fruitless. Is there no one in the world who can influence him?"

"No one," answered the father, sadly. "Patty Ainsworth has discarded him, and since then he seems more reckless than ever before. I blamed her at first. I thought she ought to feel bound to marry him and do what she could to reform him; but I have changed my mind about that. She is too good a girl to be sacrificed to a drunkard or to be the mother of a drunkard's children."

"Any girl is too good for that, Mr. Leighton."

"Yes; but Patty is better than the average. She has been so petted and indulged in every wish of her heart, that no one really knew what she *could* do; but she joined the church about a year ago, and

since then she has developed wonderfully. If there is a Christian in that church she is one. She is a radical reformer, too.

"My wife says she does more temperance work than any other dozen members of the society. She has already reformed the worst drunkard, except Morley, in town, and she has carried attractive temperance literature to every house in the out districts. She gets the children together in the school-houses, and reads and talks to them, until they are ready to swear by her and her pledge. Sometimes she has help in doing this, but usually she goes alone and depends upon her own resources."

"Do her father and mother approve of her doing this?"

"They were not quite pleased when she commenced the work. You know, perhaps, that they are not religious people, although they have always attended church, and contributed liberally to the support of Gospel preaching. They have never been ultra-temperance people, either, until Patty came out so decidedly. Now, they second

her in all her efforts, and are very proud of the ability she displays in her new role. If Morley was worthy of her, and I could see them married and settled in life, I should be the happiest man in the world.

"I have sinned in bringing him up with such lax principles, but it often seems to me that my punishment is greater than I can bear. It is worse, too, for my wife than it is for me. Sometimes we do not mention Morley's name for days, and then we talk of him almost constantly whenever we are together.

"But I am wearying you. Perhaps I ought to ask your pardon for intruding my troubles upon you."

"Certainly not. Any one has a right to expect sympathy from a friend, and I wish it was in my power to give you more than sympathy. If I can ever give you real assistance, you may command me to the full extent of my ability."

"Thank you; I may be glad to avail myself of your kindness. I feel as though I was standing on the brink of a yawning

chasm, with the ground crumbling beneath my feet. But, doctor, there are better times in store for the world. I believe that. The liquor curse has become so dreadful it must be restricted. It can not be endured much longer without some alleviation."

"I have thought so for years; but the liquor interest is a tremendous power in the land, socially and politically."

"I know it is; but let the women of the country take this matter in hand, and we shall see a decided change. Women control the customs of society. It is in their power to banish wine-glass, punch-bowl, and beer-mug, as I hope they will. I hope my wife and daughter will do all in their power to help the cause of total abstinence. The work must begin at home; but if it ends there, it will never be accomplished. Your daughters are enlisted?"

"Yes, they are, and if the interest goes on increasing, as it has increased within the last few weeks, the whole town will be enlisted."

CHAPTER XVII.

MONEY AGAINST CONSCIENCE.

Two saloons were closed, and so far from this proving a gain to those remaining open, they found their profits materially decreased. The proprietors were protected by law; but they were so closely watched for any infringement of the conditions of license, that they felt themselves restricted. Having been notified that if occasion was given they would be prosecuted, and knowing this was no idle threat, they governed themselves accordingly.

The superintendent of every mill, and the foreman of every shop, as well as every other person having men in his employ, had been visited, and asked to insist upon total abstinence among his employés.

"That is no concern of mine," said one gentleman, who was a moderate drinker,

and whose two sons frequented the clubroom, the doors of which were still open to the initiated. "If those who work for me do what is required, to earn their wages, I pay them, and there my responsibility ends. I can not trouble myself further."

"But teetotalers will do better work and more of it," responded Mr. Ryeland, who had volunteered to call upon the men representing the different industries of the town. "I should be sorry to seem impertinent, but this is a matter in which we are all concerned. With few exceptions, the patrons of these saloons are dependent upon their daily wages for the support of themselves and their families. Every cent they can earn is needed in their homes."

"All that may be true, but it is no concern of mine," was replied with cool politeness. "Our mill is not a reformatory institution. We must have men, women, and machinery; and while we are responsible for keeping our machinery in good working order, we acknowledge no such re-

sponsibility in regard to our workmen and workwomen. If a man becomes unfitted for his work, from any cause, I discharge him at once. The loss is his, not mine. So, as you see, I can not comply with your request."

Fortunately, others were inclined to aid in the work, so that, on the whole, these

visitations resulted in much good.

"We have not gone far enough yet," said the foreman of a shop employing a large number of men of different ages. "A good many boys and young men have no comfortable place to spend their evenings. They are obliged to board as cheaply as possible, and can not expect more than a plenty of plain food and decent lodging. They need a pleasant room where they can go after working hours, and at least be out of the way of evil surroundings. They are almost driven to the saloon for want of a better place; and when there, it is only natural that they should spend money for drink. If they are to be kept away from the saloon, they must be furnished with some other place of resort."

"I agree with you," answered Mr. Ryeland. "I have thought of it before, and the woman's temperance society will, I think, make provision for a safe resort. They have the matter under consideration."

"Then we can safely leave it to them; for what they undertake they are reasonably certain to accomplish. A readingroom would be a blessing to the whole community; and if we could have a cheap restaurant connected with it, that would be an additional blessing."

"That, too, has been thought of; and if it can be managed, without trespassing upon the little temperance saloon on Mr. Hover's broad step, I presume we shall have it."

"We must have both reading-room and coffee-room," remarked Elva Harris, when talking with her sister. "I have been thinking about it ever since our last meeting; and the very rooms we ought to have are those occupied by the club. They are in just the right place, and easily reached by both front and back stairs."

"But those rooms are rented; so, of course, we can not have them."

"I don't suppose we can; but Mr. Minturn ought not to rent them to such a club. He professes to be a Christian, and he is doing wrong to allow liquor-drinking in such a way on his premises. His case comes in my department, and I will see him to-day, so that I can report to-morrow."

Mr. Minturn was annoyed when his young lady visitor told him her business.

"If the rooms were vacant you should have them; but I can not interfere with present occupants, unless I have some good reason for doing it. So long as the young gentlemen of the club pay the rent and are careful not to trespass upon the rights of their neighbors, I can not recall the lease."

"But, Mr. Minturn, they are just making drunkards of themselves, and every one else they can bring under their influence. A good many people say the club-room is as bad as any saloon in town. Only last week, Mason Wyman was so intoxicated

with liquor, he says he was forced to drink there, that he did not go home until morning. Something was wrong about that."

"Of course. I heard of it, and I said then, as I say now, Wyman should have kept out of the club-room. He is only a boy, anyway, and he had no business there."

"He was invited there, and he says he had no idea he would be asked to drink liquor. If his father had been at home, he probably would not have gone."

"Perhaps not. I rather think the members of the club went too far; farther than they would if they had not taken a little too much themselves. I spoke to West and Latham about it, and they said they got jolly over some news they heard, and celebrated stronger than they meant to. They were sorry about Wyman, but I don't suppose he drank a great deal. It was something new for him, and went to his head as soon as he swallowed it. The young gentlemen had no wish to injure him. They regarded the affair as simply a joke."

"It was a very serious joke to Mason, and a great mortification to his parents; but it will not occur again. He has taken the pledge, and says he will die before he will ever taste of liquor again. The clubroom is a bad place."

"I am afraid some things are done there which ought not to be. When I rented the rooms I had no idea liquor would be carried into them. If I had——"

Here the speaker stopped abruptly, as if fearing that he might say more than he desired.

"Then, Mr. Minturn, I must report to our society that we can expect no help from you?"

"No, indeed, Miss Harris. You are doing a good work, and I wish you success. You are benefiting the town. It was time something was done, and I shall be glad to help you whenever I can do so consistently."

Elva Harris bowed herself from the gentleman's presence, neither surprised nor discouraged at the result of her call. Going directly to Mrs. Eastwood, she reported her failure to impress Mr. Minturn with a sense of his responsibility as a landlord.

"If you had known that he is the owner of a building occupied by one of the largest wholesale liquor-dealers in the city, perhaps you would not have called upon him."

"I am not sure. Is he such a man as that?"

"A wholesale liquor-dealer rents a store of him."

"Then he ought to be excommunicated from the church. He certainly would be if his fellow church-members thought as I do. If he has any conscience, it must condemn him."

"He offsets money against his conscience. He receives an enormous rent, and, as far as possible, keeps his ownership in the background. We must look for other rooms to serve our purpose."

"I suppose we must. I tried to be respectful to Mr. Minturn, but, Mrs. Eastwood, I did want to tell him that he would

never help convert the world, until he should be a more consistent Christian. Why, if I professed to be a Christian, it seems to me I should be constantly on my guard lest I might do something that would be regarded by others as inconsistent with my profession."

"Be a Christian, Elva, and show us a consistent life. Think how much more good you might do, than you can possibly do now."

Elva Harris made no reply to this. Personal religion was a subject she did not wish to discuss, even with her dearest friends, although it engrossed many of her waking hours.

At the next meeting of the woman's temperance society, estimates were made of the probable expense of fitting up a reading-room, with coffee-room adjoining, and a committee was appointed to solicit funds for the purpose.

Serving on this committee, Elva Harris called again upon Mr. Minturn, receiving a generous donation, although she fancied it

was given reluctantly. She it was, also, who visited the saloons, asking for aid in the new enterprise; and in no case was she denied.

Mr. Reegan, whose wife was a member of the society, and who was himself a pledged man, gave ten dollars, unsolicited; asking that, if possible, the rooms might be in readiness at Christmas. "If you need more from me, come, and I'll divide my last dollar for you," he said, with tearful eyes; "I can't go back to make up to my Janie, but I'll do all I can for what are left. The saloons are worse places than anybody knows but them who keep them, and there are worse things done than you'd believe; but when a man is wild for money as I was, everything goes down before it. It is not all the whiskey, though, Miss. The rich ones with their wine are as bad as the poor ones with their whiskey. You'll mind it, the same as I, if you watch to see."

Not long had the people of this town to watch before seeing the proof of Mr. Ree-

gan's assertion in their very midst. In a low drinking-saloon, the proprietor of which had been loudest in declaring his right to sell what he pleased, two men became so excited with liquor, that from angry words they proceeded to blows. Becoming more infuriated, one of the men seized an empty bottle, and, striking his combatant, inflicted a fearful wound. Shouting then like a madman at the sight of blood, he seized the wounded man, who, in turn, grappled with his assailant, until it required the united strength of four others to separate them.

This done, and realizing the danger, the proprietor of the saloon dispatched a messenger for Dr. Harris, who arrived only in time to save the bleeding man's life and avert the crime of murder.

After the blood had been stanched and the wound dressed, the sufferer was taken to his wretched home, where wife and children were destitute of the very necessaries of life. There the doctor left him, promising to see him again early in the morning An hour later, Dr. Harris' office-bell was rung violently, and answering it himself, he was told that a young man who had been accidentally shot desired his services at the earliest possible moment. He asked no questions, but hastened to obey the summons.

In this case the wounded man was found in an elegantly furnished room, resting upon a luxurious bed, and surrounded with all the appliances of wealth. A few words from his father sufficed for all necessary information, while a ghastly wound in his side, which still held the well-nigh fatal bullet, told the rest.

It was a painful process, yet borne without a groan, and when, at last, the probing and dressing were over, the patient was left in as comfortable a condition as circumstances permitted.

CHAPTER XVIII.

"WINE IS A MOCKER."

EARLY the next morning, Dr. Harris received a call from Angus West, who said abruptly:

"I wish to know the truth. Is Will

Latham likely to recover?"

"The chances are in his favor," replied the doctor. "It will be a matter of time; but if he can be kept from excitement, there is a reasonable prospect of ultimate recovery."

"Then his wound is not necessarily fatal?"

"It is not. The worst feature of the case is that he had been drinking heavily, so that his system was not in a normal condition; and of course we must expect more or less fever, but I hope to pull him through."

- "Dr. Harris, I know I need not ask you to do your best for him, but if he dies I shall be his murderer, although I would not have done him an injury for the world. It was wine which did it."
 - "Wine is a mocker."
- "Truer words were never spoken. Will does not blame me. He was the first transgressor, but I ought to have realized that he was not responsible for what he said. I was in just the state to take offence at a word. It was the first time I was ever engaged in a quarrel, and it will be the last."
 - "Are you so sure of yourself as that?"
- "Yes, sir, I am. My revolver is beyond my reach; and as for wine, I have done with it."
 - "And all other alcoholic drinks?"
- "Yes, sir; wine stands for the whole list. It has come near to being my ruin. Possibly my ruin is complete. If Will Latham dies—"

Here a perceptible shudder passed over the speaker, and with a deprecating gesture, he was about to leave the office, when he turned to say, in a hoarse whisper:

"Please consider this interview confidential."

In less than half an hour Dr. Harris was by the bedside of Will Latham, who had passed a restless night, and was consequently in a feverish state of nervous irritability. The members of his family in attendance upon him had failed to meet the requirements of good nursing, and were anxious to transfer their responsibility to more competent hands.

"Angus West has offered his services, but we can hardly trust him," said Mr. Latham. "I suppose you know how the shooting occurred?"

"Yes, sir, and I would advise you to trust West as far as he is willing to go. He was not wholly in fault."

"I am aware of that. Will exonerates him from all blame, and has exacted a promise from me that in case he should die, West shall not be held responsible. He would talk about it last night, and in

fact he talked about so many things, we were all quite upset. He will do better with a stranger who understands managing sick people. If you will recommend a nurse, it will be a great relief to us all."

"I know of a woman whose skill and judgment can both be trusted, but she would need some assistance as well as some time for rest," answered Dr. Harris. "I should feel perfectly safe to leave your son in her care."

"Then do us the favor to engage her, and we will accede to any conditions she may make."

Miss Belinda had desired a hard place, but it was only after serious consideration that she consented to go to Mr. Latham's. Dr. Harris gave her minute directions for the management of his patient, and then left her in the pleasant room, where, with God's help, she was to battle for the life of one whose feet had well-nigh slipped.

Here her very presence inspired confidence, and when, at night, she chose to keep watch alone, with Angus West in an

adjoining room, ready to come at her call, the family retired to rest, relieved and grateful. The morning found them hopeful.

"Not out of danger, but something has been gained," was the doctor's verdict.

Meanwhile, the wounded man, who had been carried home from a saloon, was in a far worse condition than Will Latham. He was a besotted beer-drinker; irritable, unreasonable, and half delirious.

Here was work for one of the visiting committees of the woman's temperance society; Sabra Harris and Ruth Eastwood constituting this committee. Material aid was given, with directions in regard to its use. Cleanliness was insisted upon as indispensable, and practically enforced.

"How can a woman ever reach such depths of indolence and idleness!" exclaimed Ruth Eastwood, shaking the dust from her skirts after leaving the house. "There is no excuse for her, even in that old rookery. I don't believe the floor has been washed for months; and as for the

windows, they were hardly transparent. I looked into the pantry, and there was an accumulation of unwashed dishes. There was a window, but I presume it is never opened. I hope there is not another house in town so bad."

"There is but one drunkards' rookery. Father says the name suits the house, and there probably is not a family living in it, free from the curse of intemperance."

"Then I suppose we ought to call upon them, but I must wait until I have recovered from the effects of this visit. I begin to think our office will be no sinecure."

"Ours is a working society; but the reading-room committee are likely to have as much on their hands as any."

"Yes, and Elva is the very one to do her part. David says she will be sure of the necessary funds; and now that the club is under suspicion, it may be that she will secure the desired rooms."

It was soon known that these rooms had been vacated by the club. The furniture was quietly removed, the screens taken down from the windows, and the doors left wide open, as if inviting scrutiny of the premises.

Mr. Minturn was ready to make most generous terms with the society. Some things had occurred to trouble his conscience, and wound his love of approbation. A sermon to which he had listened, and which he in vain criticised as fanatical, unwarranted, and even unscriptural, had set his sins in order before him. In blaming the preacher, he found himself in the minority, and was therefore glad of an opportunity to regain favor by contributing generously for the support of temperance.

"Guess there won't be anybody shot in those rooms when the woman's society get them fixed up," said Teddy Fritter to Micky McGill.

"You don't suppose anybody ever was shot there, do you?" replied Micky, with a knowing look.

"Don't suppose anything out loud, but I think all the same. Miss Belinda wouldn't say a word when she came home for a little while yesterday. If two poor ones quarrel and get hurt, there don't anybody keep still about it. I tell you, Micky, I don't believe but what there is just as much ugly in wine as there is in whiskey, and now there isn't any club-room, somebody ought to shut up the saloons. I'm thinking we'll go round again next week."

"And can't I drum when we are marching? Now we have so many, and girls, too, we ought to have music. And I don't believe but what Ernest Crawford would play on his fife. I say, Teddy, it made me wink real fast when that rich boy asked me if he couldn't join our society. He said he wanted to help, and when he told me about his little lame sister, it almost made me cry. I saw him drawing her in a beauty of a wagon yesterday, and she looked just like the angels in pictures, only she didn't have any wings."

"I wish I could see her."

"You will see her some time. She had a kitten in the wagon with her, and that made me think of Martin. So I told Er-

nest about him, and they are coming down this way so to see him. Won't they think he is splendid?"

"They can't help it, and he'll find out pretty soon that the little girl is lame. He always seems to know when anybody is in trouble. He purrs away to Johnny a good deal louder than he does to me, and I tell you Johnny is coming up. He prays every night, and reads the Bible, and last week he earned enough to help ever so much. I heard Miss Sabra tell Miss Belinda his mind was growing the same as his flowers."

John Fritter was no longer a burden. He watched the growth of his plants, apparently so absorbed in them and in his work, that he forgot the old craving for liquor. The old kitchen, now so cheery and bright, would hardly have been recognized as the dark, dingy room which was in itself the very embodiment of forlorn poverty. Every cutting had rooted, every seed had germinated; so that even now there was promise of bud and bloom.

Mrs. Fritter was an active member of

the temperance society, and after their first visit to the drunkards' rookery, the committee appealed to her to supplement their work; thinking rightly that as she could speak from experience, she might speak more effectively.

"I will do what I can," she said, after being assured that no one else could do so well. "I used to think if a woman lived with a drunkard, she might just as well give up and not try to have anything decent, but I know better than that now. I have learned that there is a good deal in having a tidy house and wholesome meals; and it is wonderful how much you can do with a little money, if you only know how. Why, Miss Harris, it seems to me I have only just begun to live. Somebody ought to go into that rookery, as you call it, and persuade the women to make their rooms clean; and I don't know but they need a cooking-school."

"You might start such a school, Mrs. Fritter."

"No, indeed. I am only learning, but

Miss Belinda could do it. I think she can do almost anything. We don't know how to get along without her. We all trust her, and the Bedlow girls are fairly homesick for her."

"They have their brother."

"Yes, and he is a good brother, but Miss Belinda is like a mother to them."

It was with some trepidation that Mrs. Fritter prepared for her visit; but when she reached the house she found two of her old acquaintances, who began at once to question her in regard to her changed appearance. She was comparatively well dressed; she had lost something of the discouraged look which had so long marked her face, and she spoke cheerfully.

"You are better off than we are," said one; the other adding quickly:

"We should be better off if it wasn't for our husbands. They drink up their wages, and then find fault with us for not having something nice for them to eat when they come home. For my part, I don't care what my husband says. There is McIntire got his head cut, and now he will be helped, 'though they weren't any worse off than some of the rest of us."

"You are all worse off than you need to be," responded Mrs. Fritter, glancing around the disordered room. "If I was to live my life over again, I would be clean, if I did nothing else."

This remark called forth an angry rejoinder; but as Mrs. Fritter was ready to acknowledge her own shortcomings, her companions were at length induced to listen to her as she told of the efforts she had made at improvement.

"You can do better than I," she said frankly. "You are quicker and smarter than I ever can be, and if you two would only start in the right way, you could lead the whole house."

"But what would be the use as long as the liquor is sold and drank? All we could do wouldn't amount to anything."

Poor Mrs. Fritter was nearly discouraged; but remembering how others had labored for her, she went over the whole

ground again, and at last had the satisfaction of seeing a vigorous beginning made in the right direction. Mrs. McIntire was a stranger to her, yet she was kindly received, and a promise given that her suggestions should be faithfully carried out.

As the immediate result of this visit, two men were surprised to find neatly spread tables, where there had been utter disregard of anything like order or neatness.

- "Have we got company?" asked one of these men, in a low tone.
- "I expected company before you came," replied his wife, half ashamed of what might seem something like an expression of regard.
 - "But here are only two plates."
- "And only two of us to sit down to the table. You are the company I expected, and I wished I had a better supper for you. But this is the best I could do."
- "Good enough for me, wife. Better than I deserve anyway. The boss has been talking to us to-day, trying to make us swear off from tobacco and all kinds of

liquor. I thought I wouldn't do it, but now you have made things look so snug and tidy, I have half a mind to try it."

"Oh, I do wish you would. Fritter's widow has been here, and you wouldn't know her for the same woman she used to be. She told us about what the women were doing, and what she was trying to do herself; and it almost made me think it wasn't too late for us to take a new start.

We can, if you will only agree to it."

Here the poor woman paused, unable to say more, when her husband answered:

"It sha'n't be my fault if we ain't better off before the New Year comes in. Ball and I were talking about it on our way home, but we didn't quite make up our minds. We thought we'd wait and see how things looked when we came to think it over by ourselves. We didn't know whether we'd go to the saloon or not."

"What do you think about it now?"

"I shall stay at home, and I am sure Ball will, if things look as well to him as they do to me. He is a better man than I am, but he is more particular. He married his wife for her pretty face, and now that has gone he wants something to make up for it."

"She looks prettier than usual this evening. She has taken pains to fix up."

"All right, then, if the children are clean, and the table has a clean supper on it."

"It has, and the children are clean as their mother could make them."

"Good for her and you. The old rookery won't know itself. The men will be ashamed to spend their money for liquor, if the women go to fixing up in this way."

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CHAPTER XIX.

THE OLD ROOKERY.

SALOON-KEEPERS and others interested in the consumption of alcoholic drinks ridiculed the boys, parading with fife and drum; asking their one question civilly, repeating a verse from the Bible to enforce their request, and then retiring in good order.

These same interested persons sneered at the idea that a society composed of women could effect any important change in public sentiment or public manners; but they were beginning to find that they had failed entirely to appreciate the situation.

The boys' society was gaining in numbers and influence. They displayed their colors on all occasions, and were ready, at any time, to give a reason for their faith and practice. The women, too, were thor-

oughly in earnest, aggressive and persistent; although no one presumed to accuse them of having transcended the bounds of propriety. As for the society of which Mr. Ryeland was president, its members seemed always on the alert.

License had its restrictions; although these had been ignored and disregarded, until they were nearly forgotten; but temperance workers knew the exact limitations, and gave notice that any infringement would be prosecuted to the full extent of the law.

"That is next to shutting them up," said Mr. Reegan, who was enlisted in the work. "They want to sell every drop they can, without asking any questions. When it comes to being watched and threatened, the business has too many hitches. Selling liquor to make money needs to be free and easy. That is my experience, and a license don't amount to much for holding anybody back. It is a good cloak for covering a good many things a man don't want to have seen."

"A man who sells liquor will stretch his

conscience and license at the same time," was replied.

"Yes, sir; that he will every time, and there's not many but stretch their conscience when they begin with the liquor. There's not much of a chance here now. You see, sir, they counted on the young men for beer, and something stronger when they grew older, but now there's somebody at their elbows, asking them here and there of an evening, so they get weaned from the saloons before they hardly know it. The bosses, too, are most of them on our side, and I'm thinking the rest will soon be coming round."

"To do that consistently, they must first change their own habits."

"You are right in that, sir, and I'm thinking one will do it, or find himself like the man who went to be married, and found never a woman at the end of his journey."

"I think I understand you, Mr. Reegan."

"If you don't, I'll be telling you that Miss Stevens joined the woman's society at the last meeting, and you mind, sir, she didn't do it for nothing. She can have her own way now, with will and won't, as she pleases, but if she was married, there might be another will and won't under the same roof."

"Then you think it might not be so easy for her."

"It might not, sir, 'though I'm far from saying that Mr. Young is a bad man, but it is never safe trusting to liquor, inside or outside. If I was a woman, I'd not run the risk of being pushed aside for wine or whiskey. But we shall see when it comes Christmas. I am looking for great things then."

There was a general looking forward to Christmas as a grand temperance holiday, yet much remained to be done before the anticipations could be realized. It had been decided to hold a festival in the town-hall on Christmas Eve for the purpose of raising a fund to carry on the general work, while Christmas evening was chosen for the first opening of the readingroom and coffee-room.

These rooms were fast being fitted up at the least expense compatible with their purpose. The entire second floor of Whalan's block had been rented at so low a rate as to surprise all who knew Mr. Minturn's love of gain. Perhaps he hoped thus to redeem himself with those who held him largely responsible for the demoralizing influences of the club-room which had been so suddenly closed.

"A murder there would have had an ugly look," said a gentleman, referring to this matter. "It was a strange affair. I don't suppose either of the young men present would acknowledge or deny that he was responsible. I think they must have pledged themselves to silence on the subject, and I have been told by good authority that they pledged themselves to total abstinence on the spot. At any rate, nobody has known of their drinking liquor since then."

"I think I could give a pretty correct guess as to who fired the pistol."

"Of course you could. There is no doubt

about it, but fortunately there will be no need of a legal investigation. Will Latham is doing well, and he is better off to-day than he would be if he had gone on drinking until this time."

"It was rather a strange coincidence which gave Dr. Harris two surgical cases, the same evening, from the same cause. The other patient—McIntire, I think his name is—is out, but his face is badly scarred. That was a savage fight."

"Yet good seems to have come out of it. The old rookery has been under strict surveillance since then. McIntire signed the pledge some time ago, and with him several other hard drinkers, with whom he has been hale fellow well met. The temperance reform is doing wonders for us, and we may thank the women for the whole of it. What has been done by the men was an afterthought on their part."

"Then having come into the work late, we should be all the more active and zealous."

"Yes, and even then we can not do

what the same number of active, zealous women could accomplish. Men alone might close up the liquor-saloons, but there is other work which women must do or it will remain undone."

"You are right, and may God bless them every one, and give us men the grace to acknowledge their right and ability to work according to their own judgment. As you see, I have changed my creed," added the speaker, smiling, as he was about to leave his companion. "I thought the men could manage the outside world pretty well, while the women attended to what was going on at home, but I have learned that home interests reach a long distance beyond the street doors."

This gentleman was not alone in the change of opinions. Indeed, change was the order of the day, and, as every one confessed, these changes were all on the side of improvement. If old landmarks had in some instances been removed, others had been established on firmer foundations.

The old house, occupied by the Fritter family, the Bedlows, and Miss Belinda, was no longer regarded as a blot upon the landscape. The owner, appreciating the thrift of his tenants, and the promptness with which the rent was paid, made some much-needed repairs, promising to do more in the spring, and allowing Teddy the utmost liberty in providing quarters for his fowls.

When Miss Belinda could be spared from caring for Will Latham, she had much to see and admire in what had been done during her absence. No place had ever seemed to her more like home; and as she was greeted with the most enthusiastic demonstrations of welcome, she felt that she was no longer alone in the world.

"I am so glad you have come, and I hope you never will go away again," said Lucy and Elsie Bedlow, each with an arm around her neck. "We didn't know what to do about half the things, only what Mrs. Fritter told us."

"And the best I could do was to tell

them what you had told me," rejoined Mrs. Fritter. "It wasn't so good, coming second-hand, and I am as glad as anybody to have you back. I don't doubt you have done a great deal of good, but we missed you. We were afraid, too, that you would get sick and lame."

"I am neither. Mr. Latham's family were all very kind, helping me all they could, and not allowing me to get too tired. But I am glad to be back. I believe home never looked quite so pleasant to me as it does now."

"Then you won't go away again, will you?" said Teddy, who had waited for an opportunity to speak, when sure of being heard.

"I expect to stay," replied Miss Belinda.

"I presume I shall settle down for the winter with my plants and my cat. But where is Martin? I hope nothing has happened to him."

"Likely he has gone to Mr. Crawford's. Grace, the little lame girl, thinks he is just splendid, and he likes to stay with her, too.

She gives him pop-corn and candy, every time he goes up there; but I should think he would know you have come home."

"He will soon find it out," said his mistress, and presently he was in the room, showing by unmistakable signs that however he might regard new friends, old ones were not forgotten.

So many reports were to be made, and so much of interest told, that Miss Belinda found it difficult to decide which was of most importance; yet to none did she listen with more of interest, than to Mrs. Fritter's account of work done in the rookery.

"I thought I couldn't go there," said the poor woman. "It seemed to me I never could tell other people what to do, when I need to be told so much myself. But I promised Teddy I wouldn't refuse to do anything I was asked; so I went, and now I go twice a week and enjoy it. But I told the women I expected you would go with me next time, and you could show them about a great many things I couldn't.

"Miss Harris and Miss Eastwood go two days when I don't, and they are getting the children ready for Sunday-school. Just think, Miss Belinda, there are eight families in the house, and in every one of them there was a drunkard. A woman there told me it was always full, too, because such poor, miserable ones like to get off by themselves, and as fast as one goes out, another comes in."

"How many drunkards are there in the house now?"

"Only two, and they are thinking about signing the pledge. It was a dreadfully dirty place; but there, I don't know as it was any worse than my room used to be. So I better not say anything about it. I told two women I used to know how I manage now, and they promised to try my ways. But you must go and see for yourself."

She could not see all which had been accomplished; neither could Sabra Harris and Ruth Eastwood, although their visits had been frequent and regular.

The house had been thoroughly cleaned

from garret to cellar, and the landlord had whitewashed it as thoroughly. Beds and bedding had been aired; closets cleared of rubbish, and scanty wardrobes made more presentable.

Mrs. Fritter's suggestions had been made to women, the best calculated of any in the house to influence others; and their husbands aiding them, they had commenced at once the work of improvement.

"We were driven to turning over a new leaf," said the most unfortunate of the rookery tenants. "When McIntire was brought home, we thought he'd be sure to die, and that made the rest of the men think of themselves. My husband can't earn much, because he has lost three fingers; but he spent 'most everything for liquor, and left me and the children half starved. Sometimes, too, I'd take a drop myself, and that made things worse. The first time the young ladies called, I was that far gone I couldn't talk rightly; but they left a tract I promised to read.

"It was Saturday afternoon, and for

Sunday we had only potatoes and salt, and not a drop of liquor, nor a penny to buy it. I didn't mind breaking a promise, but for want of something else to do, I took up the tract. We are both poor scholars, but I made out to spell it through, and then my husband wanted to hear it again, so he could understand it better. I did better the next time; and would you believe it, I read the tract through four times before he was ready to have me stop.

"It was just what you'd call a story; but it went right straight to our hearts. The men and women in it were poor and bad as we were until they stopped drinking, and that set us to thinking maybe it wasn't too late for us.

"We've had other tracts since then, and all of them good, but there'll never be another to us like the first one; and now, thank God and the blessed temperance women, we are gaining every day."

CHAPTER XX

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READING-ROOM AND COFFEE-ROOM.

It was the intention of those having the matter in charge to invite every family within the limits of the town to contribute in some way to the success of the temperance festival; and the response quite exceeded the most sanguine expectations.

"It seems as though 'most everybody was going to be put forward," said an old lady who had spent her whole life in a little brown house in one of the back districts. "There's folks to be among the first that nobody ever thought of before, and one thing is just as good as another to give. At any rate, the village-folks call it so, and they are the ones that started about the festival.

"I hadn't anything to give but a pair of silk stockings I knit last summer. I learned the stitch when I was a girl, and my cousin, who was here visiting two years ago, gave me the silk. I knit them at odd times, when somebody came in, or I got tired of doing homely work; but when they were finished they were too fine for me. I hadn't any girl to wear them, and when Elva Harris asked me what I would give, I thought of them. I knew it wasn't any use to ask Josiah for money, so I had to depend on myself for what I could give. I brought out the stockings, and Elva Harris said she never saw any handsomer ones, and they would sell for a good price.

"I tell you I was glad, for I've wanted to do something to help that woman's society ever since I heard of it. Josiah don't fellowship it a mite. He don't believe in women coming to the front, as he calls it. He thinks it ain't their place, but he is going to the festival and so am I. Elva Harris talked to him till he promised, and he won't go back on his word. Maybe I shall feel like a stranger when I get there, but I am going."

This possibility had occurred to Elva, who remarked to a group of young ladies:

"Those who come in from the out districts must receive particular attention, so they will consider themselves an actual part of the festival. I learned one thing in my visits; all the talent is not massed in our village. Some of the very best people live outside, as well as some of the poorest. I thought no place could be worse than the rookery has been; but if I was one of a drunkard's family, I should a thousand times rather live there, than in a poor, dilapidated house, at the edge of a wood, or on some bleak hill, where I could only watch and wait for whatever a drunkard might bring to me. There are a few such houses in town, and it makes me shudder to think of what is in store for the inmates this winter."

"None of them will be at the festival."

"I am afraid not, although I gave tickets to four boys, who said they would come if they possibly could. If I can get them here, I may be able to get them into the Sunday-school, and then there will be hope for them."

At last, the long expected evening arrived, and everything was in readiness. People came early, that none of the entertainment might be lost; and among others were the four boys who had received free tickets, and who also received a cordial welcome from the donor of these tickets.

The entertainment consisted of instrumental music, singing, pantomimes, a short drama; and a five minutes' speech which was loudly cheered. Then refreshments at reasonable prices, which were eaten, as if the success of temperance work depended upon eating; yet when no more could be disposed of in that way, much remained to be sold at auction.

There was a variety of miscellaneous goods; bags of grain, vegetables, butter, cheese, and two loads of wood; the last to be delivered within ten days. A ready sale was found for these, and then the silk stockings were brought forward. At once a bid was made which more than satisfied

the woman whose gift they were. Other bids followed in quick succession, until Mrs. Fayette Lyman offered a price no one else would think of paying, and so became the possessor of the dainty stockings.

"That is her way of giving," said Mrs. Eastwood to Mrs. Ryeland. "Her husband absolutely refused to give us a single dollar, and I suspect he forbade her giving anything. But she has an unlimited amount of money at her command, and I presume he would not care if she paid twenty dollars for every pair of stockings she wears. He is away at present."

"Yes, and I am surprised to see her here," was replied. "She has spent money liberally since she came in here. She told Teddy Fritter she would pay for a good supper for any ten boys he might select, and she has bought some of the most expensive articles we had for sale."

Mrs. Lyman had been really munificent in her purchases; the four boys, to whom the evening's experience was like their first glimpse of fairyland, sharing in her bounty. They believed in temperance, and went to their homes, resolved to be total abstainers for life. They were ready for Sunday-school, also, promising to be present the next Sabbath.

The festival was a complete success. The net proceeds were much larger than had been anticipated, and a new impulse was given to temperance work.

The next evening the reading-room and coffee-room were to be opened, to which opening all were invited; therefore, it was with this in prospect that the company dispersed, to meet again when "Merry Christmas" had gladdened young and old all over our land.

Christmas was to be a busy day, and strangest of all strange things, there was to be a Christmas tree on the first floor, front, of the rookery. Teddy Fritter and Micky McGill provided the tree, and called upon the members of their society to assist in providing presents. Such presents had never before been seen in the old house; such shouts of gladness had never before

been heard there; and altogether it was a grand day for the children.

Then in the evening came the opening of the reading-room, free to all; while just across the hall, coffee and cake were sold at so cheap a rate, as to astonish those who tested their quality.

"How can you afford it?" asked one, of the matronly-looking woman who issued tickets, received payments, and had a general oversight of whatever transpired in the room.

"By good management," she replied pleasantly. "The comforts of life are cheaply purchased. Most people can have what they really need, if they spend their money wisely."

"That means to buy coffee instead of beer."

"Yes, and it means, too, to buy bread instead of tobacco."

"You are right, madam, and that is what I am going to do in future."

"I, too," chimed in others who had heard this short colloquy, and wished to testify against beer and tobacco. It might have been supposed that a large majority of the men of the town had arrived at the same conclusion, since it required the services of four boys to respond to the calls made for coffee and cake.

The reading-room, also, presented a busy, though quiet scene. There was nothing to pay for the privilege of spending every evening of the week—Sunday evening excepted—in perusing all these papers and magazines in a well-warmed, well-lighted room.

"I think we ought to give something for such a privilege as this," said a young man, looking up from the paper he was reading. "It will cost a good deal to keep this room open, the year round, and supply it with literature. Suppose we put up a box by the door, and drop in a penny when we come here. The poorest of us would hardly feel that, and it would amount to something at the end of the year."

"Put up the box, and let everybody put in what they please," was responded, and this being satisfactory to all, it was decided that it should be done.

The broad-step restaurant was closed, yet Teddy Fritter had no lack of employment. He was paid for assisting in the coffee-room, and at the same time allowed to sell peanuts for his own profit.

Miss Belinda had been mentioned in connection with the coffee-room, but she preferred that some other should take charge of it, leaving her at liberty for other work. She had changed much since Sabra Harris first saw her, dependent upon her crutches, and struggling for the means of subsistence. Always self-reliant, she had gained a broader outlook upon life, and a juster appreciation of her own powers.

Perhaps her time for hard study had passed; but she read much and judiciously. Meeting people of culture and intelligence, she was quick to learn from their superior knowledge and manners, while her unselfish kindness made her polite in the best sense of that word. She was never com-

monplace, because she was always original and earnest.

Will Latham had found her not only a skillful nurse, but an entertaining companion. She never wearied him; on the contrary, the sound of her voice, as she crooned some old hymn, lulled him to sleep, when sleep had seemed impossible.

He had not recovered his usual strength, but he was able to move about the house, and drive for an hour or two, when the weather was fine. In his drives he was accompanied by Angus West, who was now an open advocate of total abstinence, ready to give assistance to the cause in any way he could. He aided materially in carrying out the arrangements for the festival, and paid for the first cup of coffee sold in the coffee-room.

"The women have accomplished what they attempted," said a plainly-dressed man to him, as they stood sipping coffee.

"They have well begun their work," was replied.

"So that is the way you look at it."

"Yes, sir; this is only the beginning."

"I don't know but you are right, and it is often easier to begin than to keep on. For my part, I never had any trouble with liquor among my folks, and didn't think much about it anyway; but my wife and girls got stirred up, and they stirred me up, till I thought it was time for me to turn to and lend a helping hand in the good work. I wonder now that the women didn't start up sooner."

This was the remark often made by those who realized little what it had cost to stem the tide of popular opinion and come to the front as reformers.

"I should like to stop now for a while and take breath," said Elva Harris to her sister, the morning after Christmas. "I believe I am tired, and I know I am glad and thankful. It was all better than I expected. Everybody did the right thing at the right time. But New-Year's will soon be here, and there is my Sunday-school class to be remembered. Grandmother says she must go home the second day of

January, and I am to go with her. I wish, for grandmother's sake, Miss Belinda would accept her invitation for the winter, but we could hardly spare her, and she would prefer going in the summer."

"Your Sunday-school class will have two holidays near together," answered Sabra.

"Yes, but the poor things have hardly had a holiday before in all their lives, and it pays for all the trouble just to see them so happy. I am glad they are of the poorest, too, because I have the pleasure of helping them. It is a pleasure, Sabra, and I have been thinking I should turn my motto again, for I really believe I never enjoyed myself so much as I do now, working for others."

"I knew you would enjoy it, and you seem to do it easily, too. I don't see, either, that you neglect any of your home duties."

"I try not to, but Susan West says I am sacrificing myself for a mere idea."

"For what is she sacrificing herself?"

"I can think, but I dare not say. The last time I saw her, she said she was dependent upon tonics and stimulants for all the strength she had; and it would not be difficult to tell what the tonics are."

"I wonder Angus does not try to influence her to do differently."

"I presume he does, but there are three against one. You know Mrs. West considers herself an invalid, and Mr. West is a moderate social drinker. He did not learn a lesson with Mr. Latham. He would consider himself disgraced by signing a pledge of total abstinence, the same as Mr. Lyman would."

"Yes, but he is a different man from Mr. Lyman, and he will not yield so much to his appetite. I am sorry for Mrs. Lyman."

"Sorry for her!" repeated Elva Harris.
"She looks heart-broken. I don't suppose
she would dare attend one of our temperance meetings, although she has given us
so much substantial help. Mrs. Jones was
delighted that her stockings sold so well,

and I am sure no one but Mrs. Lyman would have paid ten dollars for them. She will have an elegant home when their house is finished, but for all that I pity her."

Fayette Lyman would have been indignant, had he supposed, for a single minute, that any one considered his wife a woman to be pitied. He had wealth, position, and influence, in all of which she shared.

She was young, beautiful, and accomplished. She had servants to do her bidding, and a husband who had wooed her with passionate ardor, professing to have found in her all he sought of blessing; yet even then there came between them the spirit of the wine-cup, which mocks ever at love and happiness.

CHAPTER XXI.

POVERTY DISTRICT.

Grandmother Harris had intended returning home much sooner, but so many reasons were urged for prolonging her visit, it was not until the second day of the New-Year that she caught a glimpse of the old farm, to which even the animals seemed to welcome her.

Nothing had suffered during her absence. The usual work had been done in the usual way, and results were satisfactory to all concerned. Jerry Simpkins, who was cutting lumber, presented himself in the evening, ready to give an account of what he had done.

"Better than all the rest, I know you have kept your pledge," said Mrs. Harris, after listening to his report. "Your face tells me that."

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"Yes, ma'am; thank God I have kept it, and with His help I will keep it to the end," was replied.

"Have you learned that you can not do

it in your own strength?"

"Indeed, ma'am, I have. It has been the worst fight of my life. I came near giving up one day, but Patty Ainsworth happened along by the bridge where I was standing, looking down into the river, and as she passed me she said:

"'It is better to look up than down.
Help comes from above.'

"'Then I must look up, for I never needed help any more than I do now,' I answered.

"'I was thinking exactly the same thing only a little while ago,' she said with a smile, and then she asked me if I had prayed for help. I told her I wasn't a Christian, and so it wasn't of any use for me to pray.

"But she talked to me a while, and after she left me, I went home and thought about it. It was a good many years since I had been on my knees, but I must do something, or I knew the devil would have me in his clutches again; so I knelt down and cried, 'Lord, have mercy on me, and give me strength to keep my pledge.' I said the same words a good many times, and every time I said them, I felt surer of myself, until at last I knew the worst was over."

"Then you were helped."

"Yes, ma'am; if I was ever helped in my life, I was helped then. I had strength given me to carry on the fight, and since then, when I have been hard pushed, I take to praying again."

"I am thankful you have learned by experience that the Lord is ready at all times to hear and answer prayer."

"It seems too good to be true for such a man as I am; but the women have a prayer-meeting to-morrow, and, to my mind, there's nobody here needs praying for more than Mrs. Leighton and Morley."

" Is Morley at home?"

"I don't know. He has been at home,

but he hasn't been seen outside the house for several days. I took care of him one night, Mrs. Harris, and that was the hardest time I have had with liquor. When I found him, he had a bottle of whiskey in his pocket, and it seemed as though he was steeped in it. I worked over him, and prayed the Lord to keep me from drinking, at the same time. Morley Leighton needs praying for. If God don't interpose to prevent, he will die a drunkard before he is thirty years old; and I am thinking, too, he won't be so much to blame for it, either."

It was this thought which made his parents so charitable in regard to him, and which gave an added tenderness to their treatment of him. His mother had begged her husband to take him from the asylum in which he was confined, and her pleadings effected their purpose.

Overjoyed to be again at liberty, he acknowledged that his punishment had been just, and promised to reform. Everything was done to encourage him. So far as

possible, every temptation was removed from his path; and his mother allowed herself to believe that better days were in store for them.

Then he was missing, and a night of suspense followed a fruitless search for the absent son and brother. But very early the next morning, while the stars were yet shining, came Jerry Simpkins, informing his father that he was found, late the previous evening, under the shelter of a large, overhanging rock, where he had evidently stopped to take a drink of whiskey, and where he might have died, had not some one rescued him from his perilous position.

"I carried him home and took care of him, and I should have come and told you sooner, only I was afraid to leave him alone. When I came away, he was fast asleep."

"And you say he had in his coat-pocket a bottle partly filled with whiskey. What did you do with the whiskey?" asked Mr. Leighton.

"I poured it into the snow, and then had hard work to keep from eating the snow," was replied. "You don't know what a fight Morley would have to make to keep sober the rest of his life. It seems to me, sometimes, I would rather die than keep it up for twenty or thirty years."

"It won't last as long as that, Simpkins.
The appetite for liquor will die out after a while."

"I don't know about that, sir. I have heard of some who inherited it, and it never left them. There is more to that than folks think."

"I am afraid there is. But about Morley. I will be down for him as soon as I can, and I will pay you for taking care of him."

"There is nothing to pay, Mr. Leighton. I would willingly take care of him for the next five years, if that would save him."

"Thank you for your kindness. I wish I knew how he could be saved. If I was to begin over again with him, he should not even taste of sweet cider, if I could prevent it."

"You would be right in that, sir; but those of us who are grown up must do the best we can with the beginnings we had."

It was said by some that Morley Leighton had called at Mr. Ainsworth's, when Patty refused to see him, and this had so vexed and mortified him, that he sought forgetfulness in intoxication. The truth was, however, that he had been drinking heavily when he demanded to see Miss Ainsworth, and her father had turned him from the door.

"Do you suppose she cares for him?" asked Elva Harris of her grandmother, as they were talking of these two young people, whose relations to each other were so generally understood.

"Of course she cares for him," was replied. "It is not easy to unlove, and Patty Ainsworth is a girl of strong feelings. I presume that she has sometimes been half tempted to marry him and bide her fate; but she knows she has done right in discarding him; and having done it, she will not allow herself to be wretched over it,

although his conduct is a terrible grief to her.

"Her decision, too, has had an influence upon others, and some young men who are not total abstainers find themselves in less favor with young women who have received new light upon certain social questions. There is no other so bad as Morley Leighton, but moderate drinking is enough to condemn a man as unworthy to be trusted."

"Grandmother, what will become of the world, unless temperance principles prevail?"

"They must prevail. That is what we are working for; and as fast as one set of workers are retired or called up higher, another set must take their places. I don't suppose either you or I will live to see the day when there will be no alcoholic liquor drank; but we can do our part towards making its use unpopular and disgraceful. Besides, we must help people to see that its use is wrong.

"Patty Ainsworth has begun in the right

place, with the children. Mr. Simpkins told me that the scholars in Poverty District are to give a temperance entertainment in their school-house next Tuesday evening. It is to be under the direction of Patty, and the teacher, a poor girl who has good reason to hate liquor of all kinds."

"Poverty District! What a name!" exclaimed Elva.

"The name is appropriate. It is the most poverty-stricken district in town. The farms were good, but they have been allowed to run down, until the old mowing fields are fit only for pasturing. They were taken on mortgages from the original owners, and Mr. Simpkins says that since people have begun to look it up, they find that three-quarters of all the land in the district has gone for liquor. When a drinking man puts a mortgage on his farm, it generally spreads, until it covers the whole of it.

"Most of the houses are rented to families who are glad to find a shelter anywhere, and who move about as necessity

compels them. There are old orchards, bearing an abundance of cider apples every year, and there is an old mill for grinding the apples. Last fall Patty Ainsworth persuaded the women and children to dry the apples, promising to find a market for them; so there was less cider made than usual.

"She goes the rounds of the district once a month with tracts and papers, and I think most of the women and young people have signed the pledge she always carries with her. She has gained the goodwill of the men, too, and I have no doubt the school-house will be crowded Tuesday evening. Patty counts on the entertainment as a great help in her temperance work. It will be a good thing for you to go, as you may get some hints which will be of advantage to you; and besides, I want to hear all about it myself. Then there is the prayer-meeting to-morrow. We must both attend that."

"Is it only a prayer-meeting?"

[&]quot;Only a prayer-meeting-the most im-

portant meeting of all. No man or woman is fully qualified for temperance work unless able to offer the fervent, effectual prayer of the righteous, which availeth much. There is where our strength lies; and there is where the drunkard's strength lies. If you would take from him the exhilaration he gets from liquor, you must give him something to supply its place."

"But all temperance workers are not Christians, grandmother. I am not a Christian."

"More is the pity, child. If you are not a Christian, on your way to Heaven, how are you to lead the children there who come to be taught by you in Sundayschool?"

"I don't know. I think, every Sunday, how much better Sabra would do for them. She could lead them, while I can only direct them."

"You will lead them soon. I feel sure you will; but if you do not choose to go with me to-morrow, I can go alone."

No more was said in regard to this, but

the next day Elva Harris made one of the company of women who met to pray for God's blessing upon their efforts to save the erring and unfortunate. At the opening of the meeting, Mrs. Leighton said brokenly:

I am. Pray for me, that I may have strength to bear all which may come upon me. I have brought it upon myself. I acknowledge that; but my punishment is too terrible. I can not avert it. My only hope is for strength to bear it, while I do what I can to save others from a like fate."

Such prayers as followed are rarely heard. It was as if, shut out from all earthly help, each heart reached out toward the Infinite Saviour. Young and old alike offered their petitions—short, fervent, and comprehensive.

- "I listened for your voice," said Patty Ainsworth to Elva Harris, when they met at the close of the exercises.
 - "I never pray," replied Elva.
 - "Never pray!" was repeated in a tone

of surprise. "I am so sorry. I must pray for you. I will put your name on my list. I could not live without praying. It is such a comfort and help."

At this moment some one called the speaker's attention, and Elva Harris did not see her again until Tuesday evening, when superintending an entertainment as novel as it was impressive.

Among the spectators were Helen and Morley Leighton, the latter carrying himself like a gentleman, and seeming to enter into the spirit of the occasion. Why he had cared to be present no one could understand, least of all his sister, who had consented to accompany him only after repeated solicitations.

She had hardly dared trust him, although, when they left home, she knew him to be perfectly sober, as he had been throughout the evening. They had gone but a few rods, however, on their return, when she was made aware that he had been drinking whiskey. His breath betrayed him, and presently the restiveness

of the high-spirited horse he was driving showed that the reins were held by unsteady hands.

She dared not utter a word of caution, lest it should arouse her brother's anger and precipitate the danger she feared. It came full soon. The horse sprang aside from the trodden path, dashing the sleigh against a rock, and leaving the brother and sister buried in snow. This detained the horse but for a moment; the next, he was again in the track, rushing onward at frightful speed.

Those who were immediately behind stopped to give assistance, while those who were in advance turned back at sight of the fleeing horse, from which they barely escaped serious injury.

Helen Leighton assured her friends that she was not hurt; but Morley was severely bruised, and quite unable to stand when assisted to his feet. He talked incoherently, muttering imprecations upon those around him, and insisting that he needed no help in any way. After this he fell to the ground, apparently unconscious, and it was with difficulty he was lifted into a sleigh, where he was supported by two young men, who were desired to take him home as quickly as possible.

"It will nearly kill mother," sobbed Helen Leighton, turning to Patty Ainsworth, who was seated beside her. "I sometimes wish we could all die before going any further as we are now. It is too dreadful to be endured."

For answer to this there was only the closer clasping of an outstretched hand; and not another word was spoken by either until they reached Mr. Leighton's house, where Morley had arrived some moments before.

"Thank God you are not a drunkard's wife," said Mr. Ainsworth, when later his daughter told him what had occurred.

"Thank God," she repeated softly; yet there was a quiver in her voice which told of other emotions than those of thankfulness.

CHAPTER XXII.

PATTY AINSWORTH'S WORK.

It was Patty Ainsworth's work. Despite the prophecies of friends, who saw no reasonable hope of success, and the ridicule of others, who sneered at the idea of "women managing the town," she chose Poverty District as her especial field of labor.

From the time she first began her visitations, the dwellers in this district had been gradually gaining in self-respect, and the respect of their neighbors; yet few outside its limits dreamed how great a change had been wrought in them.

"They can't be beat," remarked a man, who had before said that the exhibition would do more for temperance than all the preaching of ministers had ever done. "If the boys can be kept from drinking, and

the girls can be kept from marrying men who drink, there will be some hope for them; but I couldn't help wishing they could have a fair chance in the world."

"They can have a fair chance," was replied. "It is time for the tables to be turned. Rum has been bringing down one generation after another, and now this generation is going up. Old Esquire Onderdonk's great-grandchildren may honor his name more than he ever honored it, although he was one of the first men in town in his day. I have heard my grandfather talk a great deal about him. Strange that now, of all his thousand acres, not one of his descendants owns a single foot. He built the old hip-roofed house where one of his granddaughters lives as the wife of a drunkard."

"Is Mrs. Harper his granddaughter?"

"She is, and if her boys keep on as they have begun with Patty Ainsworth, they may retrieve the family fortunes in spite of their father; or, possibly, he may be drawn into the magic circle, and lend a helping hand."

"Was old Esquire Onderdonk a drunkard?"

"He was not called so, although he was a heavy drinker. He could carry off more liquor than men of these times, and often boasted that the bottom of his glass never was so thick that he couldn't see both sides of a bargain through it. When he died, there was no mortgage on his property of any kind, but very soon after his sons came into possession of it, all that was changed. They hadn't as strong heads as their father, and the land went by pieces, until it was all gone; although I think two of the sons managed to save a little money from the wreck.

"It wouldn't be the strangest thing in the world if some of the land should come back into the family. The Harper boys are smart, and Patty Ainsworth knows how to appeal to their ambition. She won't leave any stone unturned to bring them up to the mark. People say she just governs Poverty District school, this winter. That girl that gets pay as teacher couldn't do it, but she can teach them what they need to learn; so between the two, everything goes on all right."

"It is a pity Patty Ainsworth hadn't as much influence over Morley Leighton. Wonder if she didn't thank her stars that she had done with him."

"More likely she thanked the Lord. She asks Him for help, and thanks Him for the help she is sure to get. She can lead a meeting as well as a minister, and there are boys and girls in Poverty District who can talk and pray more acceptably than a good many older Christians. Five or six years ago, no one would have expected such changes, but we may live to see greater."

"We may. I believe I am prepared for almost anything; but can you tell me how Morley Leighton managed to get drunk between the close of the exhibition and the time he drove to the door for his sister?"

"He went out while they were singing the last time, so that he had fifteen or twenty minutes, when there was no one to see what he was doing." "He must have planned for it, or, at least, he must have provided for it, or the liquor would not have been at hand."

"Of course. He drove to the Falls in the afternoon, and probably bought it there. After all Mr. Leighton has said and done, no one in town would be likely to sell to him."

"No, and selling liquor is getting to be unpopular, anyway. So much temperance talk, and temperance singing and reading keeps up the excitement; and when the women take hold of anything in such dead earnest as they have this, the men must follow where they lead."

"That is so; and the minute the women of the country say that liquor-selling and liquor-drinking shall stop, it will stop; and if to-day, every Christian woman would come to the front in this war against alcohol, brewers and distillers would soon beat a retreat.

"I don't care anything about women voting in politics, one way or another, but when it comes to questions of temperance, I think the wives and mothers ought to be counted, as they bear the heaviest part of the burden. Among men of only average means, what is spent for liquor is just so much taken from the comfort of women and children. Such a man as Mr. Leighton could afford the money expense of wine-drinking, and perhaps what Morley spends for liquor will make no great difference with him."

"Spending that, Morley will squander much more, and larger fortunes than Leighton's and his wife's together have gone through drink; although when a young man begins as Morley has, his race is generally short. He can't stand such excesses many years, and for one, I think the sooner he gets through the better. I suppose he was pretty badly bruised, last evening, but he will be out again before long."

No one seemed anxious in regard to his injuries. It was expected that he would soon recover, and while some thought he might possibly have learned a lesson which would restrain him in future, it was the

general opinion that he was past hope. Even Jerry Simpkins had given him up.

"He knows all about it, better than anybody can tell him," said this man, who held on his way in strength given from above. "He knows what his chances are without liquor, and he knows what they are with it. If he would keep sober, he could look straight over his father's head in ten years, and take his choice of places. Poor fellow! I pity him, but I can't help him. I thought I could, but he is beyond my reach."

"I am afraid there is no hope for him, although God's grace is sufficient to reclaim the vilest sinner," said Grandmother Harris. "I pray for him, but perhaps I lack faith to pray aright. His sister's life is one long agony of prayer for him, and yet he has disappointed and grieved her beyond all words to express."

"Do you suppose Patty Ainsworth prays for him?" asked Elva.

"Not with such agonizing earnestness. There were many months when she spent hours every day in praying for him; but since she has put him out of her life, she wishes to put him out of her thoughts, as she could not while making him the burden of her prayers."

"I understand it, grandmother. She feels that she has done all she can for him, and she does not wish to be made miserable by thinking of him, as of course she must, if she was constantly praying for him."

"That is it, child. She had a long struggle over it, questioning what was her duty, and I have no doubt she prayed earnestly for wisdom."

"She seems to pray over everything."

"She does, and that is the great secret of her success."

"Does she pray with the children when she has meetings for them?"

"Certainly. A meeting without prayer would do very little good."

"Then I can do very little good. I must either stop my temperance work, or—"

She did not name the alternative, but

when she met her Sunday-school class again, she talked to them in a way entirely new for her. In her next visit to the rookery, when she gathered the children into the room where they had often met before, she kneeled down, and prayed for them and with them, "every bit as good as Miss Sabra."

"I wish you would take my place in the boys' temperance meeting," said her sister one evening, when a severe headache made it imprudent for the latter to go out.

"Tell me what will be expected of me," she replied; and when told, consented to go without further comment.

The society still met in Miss Belinda's home, overflowing, if necessary, into the room occupied by the Bedlows. Miss Belinda was not present, but there were twenty girls and boys waiting for their leader. A little disappointed at first, yet soon reconciled to the change, they joined in the opening hymn, and then bowed reverently, while a short, simple prayer was offered.

Elva Harris had something new to say to them. She always had something new to say, and this occasion furnished no exception to the rule. The members of the society were prepared to do their part, but she was fully able to supply all which might otherwise have been lacking.

"There are two of them, and I thought there was only one," said Teddy Fritter to Micky McGill, who had stopped to consult with his friend. "She is a Christian, the same as Miss Sabra, else she couldn't pray so well."

This was a boy's opinion, but Elva Harris made no claim to being a Christian. Had she been asked, she would have said decidedly that she was not a Christian. But her work needed prayer; and if it did not bring a blessing to herself, she trusted others might be helped.

"Elva Harris has taken to praying," remarked Susan West to her brother; partly because she could think of nothing more interesting to say to him, and partly because she wished to know how he would receive it.

"There is need that all women should pray," he replied.

"What of the men?" she asked quickly.

"They need to pray even more than women."

"Why, Angus, I really believe you are

getting pious."

"I wish I was pious, in the deepest, holiest sense of that word. And, Susan, I wish you were more like Sabra and Elva Harris. You ought to be helping in temperance work, if for no other reason than because it is popular."

"It may be popular, here and now, but this is only a small village of mechanics and working people. I hope not to live here always, and when I go away, I expect to find very different people with very different manners. As for you, you are getting to be as fanatical as even Miss Belinda, who thinks everything depends upon a mug of beer or a glass of wine or whiskey. I have no sympathy with such fanaticism. I suppose you will do as you please, and I claim the same privilege. Because an accident—"

"Don't speak of that," cried Angus West, in a tone his sister dared not disregard. "You ought to thank God, as I do every waking hour of my life, that no worse has befallen me."

Here he paused, until by sheer force of will he compelled his sister to meet his steady gaze, when he said:

"There was a time when I was in imminent danger of becoming a drunkard, and I believe you to be in as great danger now as I was then. I have seen you more than once, when I knew you were under the influence of some alcoholic stimulant. I don't care what you call it—beer, bitters, cordial, or wine—it all amounts to the same thing, and produces the same result. It is time for you to stop tampering with such dangerous drinks. The longer you indulge in them the harder it will be for you to give them up, as you must, or become a confirmed tippler."

"If any one else had dared accuse me as you have, I would cut his acquaintance forever," said Susan West, when her anger allowed her to speak.

"You will not cut my acquaintance," was replied quietly. "We are only two, and can not afford to quarrel. You are my only sister; I am your only brother. We have both been in fault, but we may yet redeem the past. I am trying to do this. Will you help me? Will you sign a pledge of total abstinence with me?"

"You have asked me that question before; and I have no different answer to give from what I have given. I do not class myself with drunkards who need to reform, and can find no better way of doing it than by signing the pledge. I am not like Reegan, the saloon-keeper."

In making this last remark, Susan West spoke truly; for there was no more earnest, honest temperance-worker in town than Pat Reegan, the former saloon-keeper; unless it might be his son, little Pat, who never forbore speaking for the cause when there was an opportunity.

CHAPTER XXIII.

CAUSE FOR THANKFULNESS.

The reading-room and coffee-room were well established and well patronized; proofs of interest and zeal in the work of reform which could not be ignored.

Several fines, imposed upon liquor-sellers for violation of the license law, convinced them that they had no favor to expect from those who were resolved to put down the traffic. The outlook for them was discouraging. Competition was sharp, and customers comparatively few.

Young men found better occupation for their evenings than sitting in smoky, filthy saloons, listening to profane and ribald talk. The churches provided social weekly entertainments, making especial effort to bring in strangers and those who were away from their homes. This was not all easily done. It required some sacrifice on the part of those whose resources were ample for their own happiness and improvement; yet these sacrifices were cheerfully made, and it was wonderful how much of hitherto latent talent was developed. Moreover, so many were engaged in the work, that the inspiration of numbers kept them always on the alert.

Looking deeper into the causes of human misery, the men and women who had banded themselves together to fight the evil of intemperance were convinced that they who would win souls for Christ must also win these souls from the debasing influence of alcohol in all its forms. Christian work and temperance work were to them synonymous terms. Sabbath services were better attended, and social religious meetings better sustained.

No one could deny that the town had been benefited. All legitimate business prospered. Houses were renovated and fences repaired. With the opening spring, the tenants of a few old buildings, long rented to poor families, demanded better accommodations. New doors and windows were put into the house occupied by Miss Belinda and her friends.

"Do your part, and I will do mine," said the landlord heartily, although he had been considered overbearing and penurious. "Together, we can make one of the finest places in the village."

"And when it is made fine, will you turn us out for grander folks?" asked Teddy.

"Not as long as you pay your rent," was replied. "Besides, I shouldn't know where to look for any grander folks. You are all working as busy as bees, and growing richer every day."

"Do you think I'll ever be rich, sir?"

"No doubt of it. You have started right, and your brother will make money with his flowers, if he can't do it in any other way. I have been watching all of you in the house, and I am so well satisfied with my tenants, I shall do my best to keep

them. I don't want them to get so far ahead of me, that they will leave for better quarters."

"It is just temperance that made him talk so," remarked Teddy, after reporting the interview to Miss Belinda. "He belongs to the men's society, and he has promised to do all he can to help everybody. He comes into the coffee-room about once a week, and he always buys a bag of peanuts for somebody. He praised Johnnie, and I tell you that did me lots of good."

John Fritter had not thought of selling his plants; but the suggestion once made, he selected two of the most thrifty, which Teddy carried to the store of a temperance friend, in whose large show-windows they could be seen to advantage.

"They will be gone before night," said this friend, who was quite willing to take charge of them; and his prediction proved true.

They were sold at remunerative prices, and when the money obtained for them was

placed in his hand, John Fritter knew what his work was to be. He had already made a good beginning. The sunny south windows of his mother's kitchen were filled with plants in bloom, while cuttings and seedlings, in large boxes, which had been carefully kept from the cold, during winter, were now ready for transplanting.

"I had a good deal rather take care of them than do anything else," said the young florist, as he counted his treasures.

"Then take care of them," answered his brother. "Get all the plants you can, and I will sell them for you, if I have to go to the city with them. I like to sell things."

"I am glad you do, Teddy. I am glad you are different from me, but you see I can't ever be like you."

"Miss Belinda says we shouldn't ever want two in the family alike. I couldn't make plants grow and blossom as you do. Miss Sabra says it seems as though they did it just out of good-will to you. Next summer you can have beds and beds of them in the garden, and perhaps I can sell

some bouquets. You put them together so nice, I shouldn't wonder if I could. Anyway, I can try."

"Then likely you'll do it, Teddy. You always do what you want to. I wish I could. Sometimes it seems as though I

was just falling away to nothing."

"Pull yourself up then, Johnny, and ask God to help you. You can't fall away when you do that. It wouldn't do now, either, when you have only just begun. Besides your plants, you can raise vegetables and strawberries, and I can sell them. We must do as well as we can, so as to make a good show for temperance. We are bound to do it. We are going to stay here right along, and when anybody has a home like this, he can afford to work. There isn't a better spot for a garden in town. Why, I expect you will earn more than I can possibly."

"Then, Teddy, you can go to school

and be a scholar."

"I don't believe I shall. I can't afford it, and, besides, I can't stop—there are so

many things I want to do. I shall keep on studying, though, and now Miss Elva has written out a course for me, I shall know just how fast I get along. Then she and Miss Sabra are going to ask me questions, once a month, and if I am not all right, I can go over the lessons again. I know about interest now. Miss Belinda taught me, and she has taught Henry Bedlow a good many things he didn't know before. I am glad she came to live here."

Many others had reason to be glad—most of all, herself. She had found not only remunerative employment, but improved health and faithful friends. She was already well known as an intelligent, capable woman, whose energy and religious faith had sustained her under the most trying circumstances.

She was so thankful, too, for every advantage gained, and every comfort enjoyed, that her face grew fairly radiant. Each new, glad morning was to her like a resurrection; and when the Easter bells rang out their call to prayer and praise, she

brought her grateful offering to the Lord. Secretly was this done; yet one of the Lord's own rejoiced over an unexpected gift, and prayed for an unknown benefactor.

John Fritter sent to the church his offering of roses and lilies and smilax, which adorned the altar, while he occupied an obscure seat in a remote corner, listening reverently and joyfully to the words of the preacher.

In the evening there was a praise meeting, when all who felt that they had any especial cause for thankfulness were requested to manifest it by rising. Most of the audience arose at once, and while they were standing a voice broke the silence.

"I am thankful the Lord brought me to this town six months ago. It was the most fortunate day of my life, although I was so poor I was glad to accept the invitation of a boy who asked me to go home with him and sleep in a barn. It wasn't an elegant sleeping apartment, but I had occupied worse ones, and it was far better than I deserved. I was a miserable drunkard—as low down as any man can well be—and I honestly thought it was impossible for me to reform.

"But, thank God, I left this town, better in every way than I came. I came hungry, ragged, and despairing. Here I was fed, clothed, and encouraged to believe it was not too late for me to put off my evil habits. I had the promise of a good man's prayers; yet when I went out of the barn, where I had found rest and shelter, I intended to gratify my thirst for liquor at the very first opportunity.

"But something hindered me. Some influence held me back, and softened my heart, until I was like a little child longing for home. I spent the next forty-eight hours alone in the woods, drinking from a spring of clear water, and eating only nuts and roots.

"I may have slept, but it seemed to me that every hour represented a whole lifetime of agony. My sins passed in review before me, while the mocking demon of alcohol was to me a real presence. I looked about for some means of self-destruction, but as none offered, except what shocked even my hardened feelings, I determined to live; and then came longings for a better life than I had before known.

"But I will not prolong my story. Perhaps I ought not to have intruded my experience upon you, but if anybody has especial cause for thankfulness, I have. I have not tasted a drop of liquor for six months, and I ask your prayers that I may never taste it again."

The audience was deeply moved at this recital, and before the first impression had passed away, another man testified to the benefits received through total abstinence. Then another, and another, until even children caught the spirit, and were so thankful that they would never be drunkards.

Hymns were sung and prayers offered. The hour was too short for all who wished to give their testimony of gratitude, and at its close, some lingered to talk of what they had heard.

Dr. Harris, who, with Miss Belinda and Mrs. Fritter's family, was the only one who recognized the first speaker, hastened to greet him.

"Mr. Mooney, I am glad to see you," said the doctor heartily, extending his hand.

"Thank you; I am more than glad to see you," was replied. "I have come a hundred and fifty miles to thank you for your kindness to me. I saw you in church, but I thought I would wait until morning before calling upon you. I had no intention of saying a word in the meeting, this evening, but I spoke almost involuntarily."

"Your speaking did good. It drew out some who have never spoken before, and who will be the stronger for expressing themselves. You have done me good, too."

"In what way?" asked Luke Mooney, surprised at this remark.

"You have increased my faith. I have prayed for you every day, as I told you I should, and so has Belinda Mann. You

remember her. She went to school the winter you were at your uncle's."

"What! old Mann's daughter, who dressed worse than any other scholar in school, and beat us in all our lessons?"

"The very same."

"And she prayed for me! No wonder I couldn't go on drinking. I don't know as she would speak to me, but I should be glad to ask her forgiveness for having treated her as I did."

Teddy Fritter knew it was the man who slept in their barn, but he did not presume to claim any acquaintance. The next morning, however, as he was busy with his chickens, he heard his name called, and, turning around, saw Dr. Harris with a well-dressed gentleman; the latter coming up to him, and addressing him as a friend.

"I was awful sorry you didn't stay longer when you were here before, but you have made it all up by coming again," said the boy, after their first greetings had been exchanged; then adding quickly: "We can give you a better place to sleep than

the barn. We have got a spare bed now, and we should be real glad to have you stay with us to-night."

"Thank you, my boy; I am glad you are so well off, but I must be a good many miles from here before night," was replied; and after a little further conversation, the gentleman went to call on Miss Belinda Mann.

She received him pleasantly, and freely accorded the pardon he craved, while he congratulated her upon having done so much for herself and others. The call was necessarily short, as he was to drive with Dr. Harris to a station some miles away, to meet a train he would be sorry to miss.

"You did not tell me if you have a family," said the doctor, as they were talking of people they had known when younger.

"I had a wife, and I have reason to believe she is now living, although I have not seen her for five years. She left me then to return to her father's house. I didn't blame her for going, but after that, I went on worse than ever before." "Have you written to her that you have reformed?"

"No, I have not. I am considering what is best to do. I think she would come back to me, if she acted freely, but her father is a hard, proud man, who despises what he calls a temperance fanatic, even worse than he does a drunkard. He is rich, influential, and a church-member. There is the trouble with the temperance cause. There are too many professing Christians on the wrong side of the question."

CHAPTER XXIV.

MR. LELAND'S BOYS.

"My girls are better off at home. I don't want them taking part in public meetings and visiting liquor-saloons, looking after what don't concern them. I can take care of them and my boys too."

Mr. Leland had said this when the woman's temperance society was organized; repeating it on various occasions, and always with increased emphasis. He insisted that the agitation had aroused bitter feelings on the part of some who, because of it, were the more determined to continue in their chosen course.

"People can't be driven, and some things not quite right are better let alone to die out of themselves, rather than provoke so much opposition. I don't believe in so many new-fashioned ways of managing. There is a good deal more drinking than there used to be, before there was so much talk about women's societies and total abstinence pledges. I expect my boys to come up all right. I think they can be trusted to me and their own common sense."

There was a time when these boys might have been easily persuaded to sign the pledge and join with other young people in temperance work, but they had gone down since then, and although their father did not see the change, their mother and sisters were fully aware of it. They talked loudly of independence and ability to manage their own affairs, and resented anything like remonstrance on the part of friends. In all this, of course, they were encouraged by the controlling home influence, to which they referred on all occasions.

At last, however, Mr. Leland's eyes were opened. Complaints were made to him which he could not ignore. Beer-drinking and the reading of vile literature were fast

demoralizing some young men and boys, who had rendered themselves obnoxious to the better class of citizens.

"Your boys are of the number," said Mr. Leland's informant. "They seem to be running an opposition to our temperance society, and this is the outcome of it. They don't understand what an injury they are doing themselves; and if they are treated judiciously now, they may be saved; but a single false move may ruin them. Young people must be interested in something; the only question is what that something shall be."

To say that Mr. Leland was shocked would but poorly express his feelings. He attempted at first to deny the charges made against his sons, reasoning that it was impossible they could be thus guilty; yet even as he did this, circumstances, to which at the time he had given little heed, convinced him against his will.

"What shall I do?" he exclaimed, forgetting that he was not alone.

"May I tell you as I have told others?"

asked his companion, who was no other than Mr. Ryeland.

"Yes; if you have any idea what I can do, for mercy sake tell me," was replied. "I have been so proud of my boys, and, Mr. Ryeland, I am afraid I haven't managed them right. Drinking beer, smoking, and reading bad books! They couldn't do much worse than that, could they?"

"Such habits would lead to something worse. You intended to do right with your boys, but, like many others, you needed to learn by experience that your wisdom was not infallible. Now in our temperance societies we have committees to look after just such cases, and if we can secure the co-operation of the parents, I think the boys can all be induced to change their habits."

"I will do anything in my power to do."

"Then, first, will you join our society, and so give us your influence?"

Mr. Leland hesitated for a moment. To do this would be retracting his openly ex-

pressed opposition to the society; yet there was too much at stake for him to refuse.

"You may count on me," he said in a low tone. "The woman's society can depend upon my wife and daughters."

"Will you say this in the presence of your boys, the first time you meet your family together?"

"I will, Mr. Ryeland, and I thank you for coming to me. It is hard for me to give up old notions, but when I do give them up, they are gone forever. I won't ask you the names of the boys who have joined with mine, but I should like to know if mine have been the ring-leaders."

"In one way, Mr. Leland. As your sons, they hold a better position in society than the others, and if they come out on the right side, there is not much doubt but the others will follow."

The next morning, as the family were seated around the breakfast-table, Mr. Leland remarked pleasantly:

"I have been thinking over the matter, and have finally concluded to join the tem-

perance society, and go in, heart and hand, for the cause."

"Why, father, I thought you didn't believe in such societies," said his oldest son in a tone expressing the utmost surprise.

"No more did I, but I have been convinced against my will. I made a mistake, and I want you all to help me make up for it. We shall be obliged to work hard to accomplish it, but we can afford to do some hard work. Wife, I have kept you and the girls from joining the woman's society, and I am sorry for it. Whatever you may do now, I will help you in any way I can. I guess the boys are old enough to join with me, and that will enlist the whole family."

"But, father, you have always said that—"

"I have said a good many foolish things, Solon, and I wish I could take them all back; but I can't, and the next best thing is to forget them. Let us start anew, and see how much better record we can make for ourselves."

This ended the colloquy, and before an-

other temperance society meeting, so much pressure had been brought to bear upon the boys associated with the Lelands, they all signed the pledge together. Mrs. Leland and her daughters joined the woman's society, thus adding materially to its working force, and greatly encouraging all connected with it.

About this time two liquor-saloons were closed; the proprietors going into other business, and virtually sacrificing their old stock in trade.

"Lost too many of their customers," said Mr. Reegan. "There isn't a quarter as much liquor drunk in town as there was a year ago. As for beer, there has been a great cut-down on that. We counted on the boys and young men for that, but there are so many on the lookout for them now, that sales are small compared with what they used to be. I should be ashamed to tell you of the tricks of saloon men to get custom, and you would almost doubt my word too. A first-rate saloon-keeper goes in for making money any way and every

way. He can't afford to have any conscience or any heart. If he had either, he wouldn't be fit for the business."

The speaker knew whereof he affirmed, and by his plain dealing helped to make ordinary liquor-selling more odious in the community.

"Wine-drinking is going out of fashion here," remarked a gentleman well qualified to judge. "The young ladies have set themselves so strongly against it, that it is not considered in good taste. Besides, the affair in which Will Latham nearly lost his life has had an influence not easily overcome."

"Then do you think the fight nearly ended?" asked another gentleman.

"Certainly not," was replied. "It is to be a steady, prolonged fight for I know not how many years. As fast as one good soldier is called up higher from the ranks, another must be ready to fill the place, before an advantage can be gained by the enemy. The man or woman who enlists in this war should enlist for life."

"Shall we conquer in the end? That is the question I often ask myself. We have done well in this town, but how is the State, the country, and the world to be carried for temperance?"

"By individual effort, by concerted action, and by prayerful, watchful pleading with those who are treading the dangerous road to ruin. Think how many have been saved right among us; and so far as we can judge, the work began with one young lady who was resolved to save one young man. He has proved to be worth saving too."

"I know who you mean, but there was never a human being so poor, or low, or vile, as not to be worth saving. Yet there are some we can never reach. For instance: Fayette Lyman glories in his winedrinking, and boasts of his ability to drink an unlimited quantity without becoming intoxicated."

"If he means that he can retain an upright position, and talk so that his words can be understood, he may be right in say-

ing that he is not intoxicated; but I should be sorry to think he has no more judgment than he sometimes manifests. He is very unreasonable and overbearing with those who work for him. He will give an order one hour and countermand it the next. Mr. Ryeland told me himself if he was not under contract he would give up the job of building Lyman's house."

"He must be exasperating, and I pity his wife more, I believe, than any other woman I know. She has lost her bright looks and happy smile. She was an orphan, alone in the world before he married her, and of course she had implicit confidence in him. He gives her plenty of money, but it takes more than money to make a woman like her happy."

"I hope he will not come to the end of his money."

"I hope not, for his wife's sake, but men with larger fortunes than his have reduced themselves to beggary. I have been told, too, that if others had their rights he would have a hundred thousand less than he has now. His father was an unscrupulous man, bound to make money, no matter at whose expense, and there are some old people, living in poverty, who have reason to curse his memory."

"Then the son is treading on more dangerous ground than I had supposed. If I believed myself living on such ill-gotten gains, I would endeavor to make restitution, and so avert the curse. Do you suppose Mrs. Lyman knows of it?"

"I presume not, and probably it is not best she should. She knows enough now to make her unhappy."

This was too true. She could hardly tell when the first vague fear of impending evil entered her heart. She had loved her husband with a devotion as unquestioning as it was sincere; but as time went on she could not be blind to his faults. She had thought little of his wine-drinking habits until suffering from his coarseness and cruelty.

Then came to her a revelation before which all the sorrows of her past life seemed

insignificant. It was no wonder that, losing faith in her husband, she lost her bright looks. She, better than any one else, knew how far he could indulge his craving for wine and retain something like self-control. She knew, too, how, when all restraint was thrown off, he drank until he reached a state of maudlin intoxication, to be succeeded by a fit of causeless anger, when she even feared for her life.

Unwilling to expose him, and too proud to complain, one day went by after another, each leaving her more unhappy than the preceding, when at last her health gave way, and Dr. Harris was consulted.

Quick to see the cause of her weakness and suffering, he prescribed entire change of scene, cheerful company, and freedom from care. Above all, he charged her not to be troubled over what was beyond her power to control.

"Be a child again," he said cheerfully.

"That is what we all need sometimes.

We are careful and troubled about many things, when we ought to look on the bright

side and thank God for His mercies. Sometimes there will come over me such a longing to go back to my old home, and my old ways of finding pleasure in the woods and by the brook, that I feel obliged to give up my business for a few days, and fish and hunt as I did when a boy. Then I come back with a new lease of life, ready to take up my burdens again and go on my way rejoicing."

"But burdens are so different, doctor. There are some we can not lay down even for an hour."

"Then we must pray for strength to bear them without being crushed by them. You believe in prayer, Mrs. Lyman."

"I was taught to believe in it, but I have wandered far from my childhood's faith."

"Can you not go back to it?"

"I don't know that I have any right to go back. Perhaps I might, if I could go to my childhood's home. I have been thinking of it the last few days, and wishing I could drink from the cool spring where my mother used to send me with my little tin pail for water. It has seemed to me it would stop this feverish thirst which tortures me."

"Go there, Mrs. Lyman. It will do you good; and if you find it pleasant, stay for a few weeks, and see what effect the change will have upon you."

"But I can not go alone, doctor, and my husband has business in another direction. Do you suppose Miss Belinda would go with me, and take care of me? I am not acquainted with her, but I have seen her, and I know I can trust her."

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CHAPTER XXV.

CHANGES.

Not a child, dipping carefully with a little tin pail from the spring, gushing clear and cold, but a lovely woman, filling her silver drinking-cup again and again with the sparkling water.

Oh, if she could only go back to the old days, with her life before her, and the liberty of choice as it had been ere Fayette Lyman crossed her path! If she had never seen him! At thought of this, she clasped her hands tightly, remembering her happiness in loving and being loved, when the world seemed to hold no more for her to desire.

Standing there the possessor of all which money could buy; elegantly dressed, and with no thought for to-morrow's needs, many would have looked upon her envi-

ously, nor dreamed of the sorrow which filled her heart.

This was her first visit to the old home where her parents had died, and so far from being a pleasure, it had awakened so many sad memories, that she half wished it might be her last. The hotel at which she was boarding was only a few miles away, and having obtained permission of the present occupants of the farm, she was free to come whenever she pleased.

"It is not as I thought it would be," she said to Miss Belinda, who waited for her in a carriage, and who was her almost constant companion. "I have learned that we can not turn back a single page in the history of our lives. Do you never wish that you could?"

"Not now," was replied. "I used to wish I could go over some part of my life again, but I am satisfied now to go on and leave the past as it is."

"I wish I could feel so, but I am always fearing. There is always a shadow across my path, haunting me day and night.

Sometimes it is like a huge bird, flapping its black wings, and sometimes it is like a serpent, ready to spring upon me. I know it is not real, yet it haunts me all the same."

Miss Belinda could understand this terrible fear of impending evil, and as Mrs. Lyman became more confidential, she was able to give advice and counsel.

"If my husband would only give up wine-drinking!" was at first the burden of the wife's utterances. Then later, she confided to her friend the belief that he gambled—in that way sometimes losing large sums of money. "So you see everything is against me," she said when this last confession was made.

"Not everything," replied the woman, who had learned by years of discipline that if there is not some alleviating circumstance, there is always help to be gained from One whose power is infinite, and whose love is also infinite.

As Dr. Harris well knew, it was not medicine which Mrs. Lyman required. It

was simply reassurance and cheerful courage. A few weeks sufficed to prove that change of scene did not effect the desired result. Yet still she lingered, sometimes impatient for her husband's return, and sometimes dreading his presence.

At length, however, there came a change, so great as to seem to her miraculous. She accepted her fate even at its worst. She did not forget the danger which threatened, yet she was able to leave it all in the hands of Him to whom she looked as her Saviour. Gladness and joyous happiness she did not expect, but she was at peace with herself and with God.

"I can rest now, and I shall soon be better," she said to the friend who had won her from the darkness in which she had so long groped blindly.

When her husband came, her health was so much improved, that she no longer required the care of a nurse, although it was evident there existed the same cause for disquiet and anxiety which had so preyed upon her happiness.

Miss Belinda was thus at liberty to accept the invitation of Grandmother Harris, who welcomed her so cordially as a guest, she found it hard to realize her identity. There was the old house which had sheltered her and hers; the apple-trees from which she had gathered fruit, and the brook where she had often fished for a breakfast she could not otherwise have obtained; but all else was changed.

Of the people she had known, both old and young, many had died; while some who had scorned her in her girlhood had since learned the wretchedness of those who share a drunkard's fate.

"I remember I used to wish we lived in Poverty district, because there were other children there no better off than I was," she remarked to her hostess, as they were talking of the past. "I was the only really poor girl who went to this school, and it was very hard for me to go so shabbily dressed, but I was determined to learn what I could. I should have cried over it if I had had time for any such indulgence."

"Poor child; and worse than all the rest, you had no one to help you. Now, our woman's society has a committee to look after such cases as yours. The ladies do it, too, in such a way that no one need feel humiliated. We have learned that there is a more Christian way of dealing with children than to punish them for their parents' sins. Our temperance work has opened the way for more strictly religious work; and the town has been canvassed in the interest of both temperance and religion.

"Everybody is invited to attend church. The young people and children from Poverty district are constant attendants at church and Sunday-school. Many of the older people come, too, and you would know by the windows and the fences that a thorough reform is going on. Patty Ainsworth has done most of it, and I am looking to see her work on a broader scale before many years."

"And Morley Leighton—what a pity that she can not influence him."

"Yes, but he seems beyond all human

influence. He has a mania for alcoholic drinks. It is inherited, and so almost, if not quite, beyond his control."

"Mrs. Harris, will you tell me why the boys of a family inherit this appetite, while the girls are free from it?"

"It is not always so. I have known some instances where daughters have come under the curse. There is a lady now boarding in town who is an example of this. When an infant, she was adopted by a gentleman and lady who gave her the advantages of education and refined home training. They treated her as if she was really their daughter, and she knew no other parents. After her marriage, her husband discovered that she had a fondness for wine; and upon inquiry, he learned that her father, who died years before, was a confirmed sot.

"While with her foster-parents, her abnormal appetite had not manifested itself, but, under different circumstances, it asserted its full power. She realized her danger, but she went straight on, except when, at intervals, she was under some restraint. She has been confined in an asylum, but all to no purpose.

"She was anxious to come here to board with a cousin, and some of our temperance ladies have induced her to sign the pledge; but there is little reason to expect she will keep it."

"Poor woman! I never thought to be thankful for not having a drunkard's appetite; but it is certainly cause for thankfulness. There can be no greater curse. I am afraid I could not struggle against it all my life; it would be so much easier to yield."

"You can not tell. No one can know how terrible it is except by experience. But when everything is at stake, both for this world and another, there must be help somewhere to give the victory over sin. The promise is sure: 'My grace is sufficient for thee.'"

"Such a precious promise; and how much of suffering we should be spared if we could trust this promise before being driven to it as a last resort. I had learned to trust it in part when younger, but it was not until I lay helpless upon my bed, believing myself crippled for life, that I accepted it in all its fullness. It sustained me then, and it has blessed me since. I have found friends in a most unexpected manner, and sometimes I have been able to do a little for others."

"You have always been doing for others, Belinda. You deserve rest, and if you will stay with me, I believe you can find it."

Belinda Mann appreciated the kindness of her old-time friend, but she had too many home interests to be willing to leave them long. A letter from Teddy Fritter informed her that she was greatly needed. They all missed her so much, that he had been appointed a committee to urge her to come back.

Eddie Gorman had been there, expressly to see her and tell her that his mother had a good home, and he hadn't tasted of liquor or tobacco since he took breakfast with her the last time. In conclusion, Teddy wrote that there was to be a grand temperance rally in the town-hall, and of course she would wish to be present. Martin Luther stayed at Mr. Crawford's most of the time, and he and Johnny were afraid of losing him unless she came home pretty soon.

It was a boy's letter, badly written and badly spelled; yet Miss Belinda could read it and understand all it was intended to express. It was a pleasure to her to know that she was missed; and although the visit to her native town had been all, and more than she anticipated, she was glad to be on her way home.

There a surprise awaited her. Her room had been painted, papered, carpeted, and supplied with some new articles of furniture. The painting and papering had been done by the landlord, and before she could ask to whom she was indebted for other improvements, Teddy exclaimed:

"Mr. Will Latham brought the carpet and we put it down. Our society paid for the chairs, and Henry Bedlow made the table. We wished we could do ever so much more, and we will just as soon as we can. We hope you will like it, and have a real good time living here all the rest of your life."

This, then, was the reward of some of her labors, but this was not all. The next day a gentleman called at the house desiring to see her, and after asking her some questions, announced himself as the man whose unsteady steps had caused the accident resulting in her lameness.

"I have always thought of you as crippled for life, and myself as responsible for it," he said, when sure that he was speaking to the woman he had sought to find. "I can not tell you how rejoiced I am to see you able to walk. It has sometimes seemed to me that I was no better than a murderer. You must have suffered."

"Yes, I have, and I have often wondered if you kept the promise you made to me when I last saw you. I am sure now that you have, or you would not be here." "I have kept it, and I have done what I could to induce others to make the same promise. You saved me. Your prayer helped me, and now that I am comparatively rich, I have come to make what restitution I can, with money, for the suffering I caused you."

"I do not wish for money. If I have done you any good, I am more than repaid for all I suffered. The Lord raised up friends for me, and I am able to work and provide for all my needs. Give your money to help some poor women who can not help themselves, and I will count it as given to me."

With this he was forced to be content, and promising that she should hear from him again, he went his way to fulfill the second promise made to her.

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CHAPTER XXVI.

UNFINISHED WORK.

"I've got the biggest order we've ever had yet," exclaimed Teddy Fritter, as he sprang into the green-house, where his brother was busily at work. "I got it, too, in the strangest way," he continued. "I stopped to talk temperance to some boys who were making fun of a drunkard, and while I was talking, a man jumped out of a cart and wante I to see what I had in my baskets.

"So I showed him, and he said anybody as strong for temperance as I was could be trusted. He bought everything I had, and took me to his store, where he sells fruits and vegetables. He said he had been thinking of brightening up the place with plants and flowers, and he was glad he saw me. I was glad too, I tell you, and I wrote down what he wanted. Here it is,

and you can read it while I go over to see about Dr. Harris' garden."

John Fritter read the order, and then looked around to see if it could be filled. When satisfied that this could be done, he returned to his work of potting plants from a large box in which they had been well started.

Five years had wrought a wondrous change in him. He would never be as strong and self-reliant as his brother, yet he did the best of which he was capable; gaining slowly but surely in all the essential characteristics of a true manhood. Teddy was salesman, but he kept his own accounts, and knew exactly what outlay he could afford to make.

He had proved himself worth saving, as had many others to whom a helping hand had been extended. He realized, too, from what he had been saved, never forgetting how much he owed to Sabra Harris, whose friendship he still enjoyed, and under whose instruction he had become an intelligent botanist.

If his appetite for alcoholic drinks was not dead, it certainly gave no outward signs of life. He lacked the persuasive powers which made Teddy so effective a reformer, but he could tell his own story with a simple pathos which seldom failed to produce its effect. He was a striking example of the benefits of total abstinence, yet there were others whose improvement was scarcely less marked.

The men living in the rookery at the time when Dr. Harris was called to visit Mr. McIntire had become total abstainers, and were therefore able to provide for their families respectably. Several members of these families had joined the church at the same time as Elva Harris, with Mrs. Fritter and her sons, and Micky McGill, who could not be left behind by his friend Teddy.

Temperance had served as the handmaid of religion, although, in some instances, professing Christians had been most pronounced in their opposition to aggressive temperance work. Time had changed the opinions of many, but it still remained true that there was much of indifference where there should have been hearty co-operation.

Those who began the work continued it; the leaders keeping resolutely at their posts, and doing all in their power to maintain an unflagging interest. The readingroom and coffee-room were made constantly attractive. The visiting committees did their work faithfully, so that no stranger coming to the town had reason to complain of being neglected.

In all these changes no one rejoiced more heartily than did Miss Belinda, who, however, divided her time between her own home and a home in the city, where a limited number of poor women could find shelter and rest.

"This is your charity," said the gentleman who had established the home and who desired her to take charge of it. "It does not express a tithe of my gratitude to you, but it is the best I could do."

"It is enough," she answered. "I have done nothing to deserve so many blessings,

and so many friends. I have more reason for gratitude than you, and I must express it by trying to help others, as the Lord gives me opportunity."

She gave varied help to varied people; to some in garrets and cellars, where poverty and vice held high carnival; and to some in elegant dwellings, where sorrow and sickness and death had entered. Wherever she was most needed, there she gave her best services.

Teddy Fritter consulted her on all occasions. She knew what were his plans for purchasing the house in which they lived, and how much had been already saved toward making the first payment. The present owner had engaged to sell to him on easy terms, at the same time making all necessary repairs; and if the years of waiting might seem long, Teddy was too busy to be impatient.

Mrs. Lyman often sent for Miss Belinda; clinging to her as the one earthly friend to whom she could confide her troubles, and upon whose friendship she could rely.

When her husband died of a disease induced by his drinking habits, it was Miss Belinda who comforted and supported her, and when she found that only a pittance remained of the once large fortune, it was this friend who advised her how to make the most of the means at her disposal.

"O, Miss Belinda, I almost wish Susan West would be so sick, she would be glad to send for you, and you would put her upon the strictest regimen," said Elva Harris, when returning from a call on this young lady. "I found her, as usual, with a raging headache, and made my escape as soon as possible. There is no one but you could influence her."

"I certainly could not. If her brother failed, I am sure that I should."

"I was so sorry for Angus West when he went away! I am sure he loved Sabra, and I am reasonably certain that she refused him, although she will not acknowledge it. Then there was Susan, a confirmed tippler, if not a downright drunkard. Almost everybody else has been improving, but she has deteriorated in every way.

"There have been so many reforms, I don't see exactly how we can accomplish as much in the next six years, as we have in the last six. Grandmother says there is no Poverty district in her town now. When Patty Ainsworth began her work there, every man in the district drank liquor, and some of them were perfect sots. Two have died since then, and the rest are all teetotalers. The Harper boys were the first to sign the pledge, and they are growing up, smart and intelligent. Their father has turned around, too, and Patty has helped him buy the house he lives in, with a hundred acres of land. People say most of the money left her by her great-aunt has been invested in that district."

"I hope she will find the investment profitable."

"I have no doubt she will, although her largest dividends will not be in money. She is a wonderful girl, and she is doing more good than she ever could have done as Morley Leighton's wife."

"He is gone beyond her knowledge."

"Yes, and beyond the knowledge of his parents. Mr. Leighton told father they had not heard from him for nearly four years."

What these years have brought to the wanderer, God and himself only know. Living or dying, he has sent to his friends no tidings. It may be that his body rests in some Potter's field; or worse, he may be the companion of criminals and outcasts.

But he has not fallen alone. Other sons, over whom fathers and mothers have wept and prayed, have gone down the same road, to plunge at last into the same abyss of ruin. Then of still other sons, who could say with truth, "No man has cared for our souls," a vast army has moved onward year by year to join the sad procession.

And yet the curse remains upon us. From homes desolated by the demon of intemperance, there goes up to heaven the cry of breaking hearts, mingled with that of starving children. Prison doors swing heavily to admit those whom alcohol has

maddened, until crimes are committed for which expiation must be made in solitude and silence, or upon the scaffold.

This curse must be removed, or our country is doomed. This evil must be met and conquered, or we must acknowledge ourselves enslaved by the vilest enemy ever invading a Christian land.

THE END.

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